



Wilton Fire Director  
Recognized For 63  
Years of Service

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Murieta Dance  
Heads 'Back to  
the Future'



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# RIVER VALLEY TIMES

40TH YEAR • ISSUE 01      Serving Rancho Murieta, Sloughouse, Wilton      JANUARY 12, 2024

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SANTA AND  
SIRENS BRING  
HOLIDAY CHEER



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## Levee District to Get Free Help

Cosumnes River Levee District to Get Help From Feds, State



Reclamation District 800 remains \$7.5 million in the hole after the January 2023 storms even though it has already been reimbursed for this levee repair at the end of Fig Road in Wilton. The board received the financial update at their Dec. 21 meeting. Photos courtesy of the Reclamation District 800 Board

By Gail Bullen  
River Times Valley  
Reporter

WILTON, CA (MPG) - Trustees with the Reclamation District 800 (RD 800), which maintains the Cosumnes River levees, discussed some welcome news at their monthly board meeting at the

Wilton Community Center on Dec. 21.

The United States Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) will provide the district “a free bunch of data” after it surveys the levees and banks on the north side of the Cosumnes River. It will then make recommendations to mitigate the risks.

The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) is creating a hydraulic model of the river between Michigan Bar and Twin Cities Road, which should make it easier to predict future flooding.

Both projects should help secure future funding. As of the meeting, the

district was \$7.975 million in the red. Most of that stems from emergency repairs to the levees after the January 2023 storms.

RD 800 maintains and repairs 34 miles of privately owned levees along the Cosumnes River between Rancho Murieta and Freeman Road off

Continued on page 4

## Country Club Members Vote for Bankruptcy Option

By Gail Bullen  
River Valley Times  
Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - Asked to choose one of three options to keep the Rancho Murieta Country Club viable, the membership has voted overwhelmingly to authorize its board of directors to initiate bankruptcy.

Board President Eric Dutton announced the outcome in an update to the membership on Dec. 29.

The other two options were to slash expenses to maintain a balanced budget in 2024 or to increase dues by 20%. All three options were explained in a Dec. 1 letter from the board and discussed at Dec. 12 town hall meeting that attracted around 300 attendees. The board conducted the electronic vote between Dec. 18 and 22.

Of the 398 ballots sent to golf members, 331 responded, with 318 supporting bankruptcy. Of the 524 ballots sent to the social members, 300 responded, with 264 favoring bankruptcy. This was the equivalent of 66 full votes as each social member holds a quarter vote.

“Thank you all for participating in this process, and it is quite clear what the membership wants,” Dutton said in his update.

Contacted by phone, Dutton said the directors voted at their Dec. 28 meeting to authorize the payment to retain the bankruptcy attorney “so he can give us the background on what we need to do.”

Dutton said the board won’t vote to initiate the bankruptcy process until the attorney confirms the club meets the criteria. One question might be the board’s plan to remain solvent in the coming year. “If we are making ends meet, do we qualify for bankruptcy,” he asked.

Dutton said the board adopted a preliminary budget at their meeting. Now he and the club’s controller will collaborate with the department heads to refine a balanced budget moving forward as best they can. The club also has received an insurance payment that will bolster cash flow.

Continued on page 3

## Local Resident Sounds Alarm About Propane Leaks

By Gail Bullen  
River Valley Times  
Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - Marcel Horowitz learned a frightening lesson on Dec. 8 while visiting her mother on Retreats Trail Court in Rancho Murieta around 2 p.m. She had no idea that homes with propane appliances, like furnaces or stoves, require separate propane sensors, as smoke and carbon monoxide detectors wouldn’t detect the gas.

Minutes after arriving, she began feeling dizzy, and her mother, sitting in the dining room, was nearly unconscious. Both had lost their sense of smell and didn’t detect the rotten egg odor added to propane. “I feel very lucky we identified what was happening to us and were able to get out of the house before going unconscious,” she said.

Horowitz and her mother felt better in the fresh air, and she called the South Gate. The on-duty officer provided the non-emergency number for the fire department, which responded promptly. Reflecting back, she said, “I probably should have called 911.”

The firefighters shut off the propane outside the house and extinguished the pilot lights inside. Fortunately, neither she nor her mother required medical treatment.

Horowitz expressed gratitude for the response by the

security officer, firemen, and paramedics. “They were all very prompt, professional, and helpful,” she said. “We are lucky to have people there when we need help.”

Following the incident, Horowitz called Bell Bros. for an inspection. A technician discovered a problem in the connection between the propane line and the furnace in the attic, causing the leak. The furnace was directly above the dining room where they had been sitting.

Breathing the propane could have been fatal, and the flammable gas posed an explosion risk. “It is certainly scary to realize that there are parts of our homes that can kill you. We will be more careful in the future, but now I am worried about everyone else,” she said.

Horowitz took to social media on December 28 to share her experience and warn other propane users. She said one respondent

sent a group text to alert all 22 homeowners on Retreats Trail Court.

Before this incident, Horowitz wasn’t aware that carbon monoxide and smoke detectors couldn’t detect the chemical formulation in propane gas. “Because it is not a commonly used item, there isn’t a law that says you must have a propane detector.”

Given that the heavier-than-air propane sinks, she recommended installing detectors about 18 inches from the floor in the kitchen, bedrooms, and garage.



Propane leaks at three homes on Retreats Trail Court in Rancho Murieta are raising concerns. The most recent was Dec. 8. Photos by Gail Bullen



A substantial propane tank next to the country club driving range serves 22 homes on Retreats Trail Court.

Having learned about two other propane leaks on Retreats Trail Court, Horowitz is reaching out to gather information from other affected homeowners. She can be contacted at mrs\_witz@yahoo.com.

Once Horowitz confirms details about the builder, she plans to make contact. “It’s scary that a number of these homes have had an issue with propane,” she said. “I’m hopeful the builder will re-inspect all of the homes to be sure they are safe and up to code.” ★



# Murieta Dance Company Heads ‘Back to the Future 2023’

By Gail Bullen  
River Valley Times  
Reporter

**RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG)**  
- With a cast of 120 dancers ranging in age from 2 to 17, the Murieta Dance Company converted an empty super-market into a time traveling spectacle for its 2023 recital Dec. 9 and 10 at Murieta Plaza

The performances attracted 500 attendees on Saturday and about 420 on Sunday, marking the culmination of the dance company’s 11th year in operation.

The young dancers showcased their skills in tap, jazz, ballet, hip-hop dancing, musical theater, and acting in the musical production “Back to the Future 2023 – The Next Generation.”

Company Artistic Director Doreen Zimmerman penned the original script featuring seven characters and integrating 36 tunes from diverse composers such as Cindi Lauper to John Williams.

In the storyline, when Doc Emmett Brown writes his notes about his discovery of time travel, he has no idea that his granddaughter, Doc Emme, will find his notebook. With the help of her friends Marty, Jenn, Einstein, and Tiff, she decodes a note her grandfather left behind. Using a magical telephone, they travel back to Hill Valley in 1955.

In the storyline, Doc Emmett Brown unknowingly leaves behind notes about time travel, later discovered by his granddaughter, Doc Emme. With her friends Marty, Jennifer, Einstein, and Tiff, they decipher the notes and use a magical telephone to journey back to 1955 Hill Valley.

After an exhilarating musical experience, the kids realize they are stranded in 1955 with no idea how to return to 2023. Fortunately, the older Doc and older Marty who are still traveling in the DeLorean connect with them. Together, they find right combination to get the kids back to their own time.

Zimmerman conceived the “Back to the Future” adaption a long time ago, waiting for the opportune time to stage it. Song selection came first, followed by the creation of characters and scenes. Drafting the script proved challenging due to the incorporation of two sets of time travelers.

The production featured more dialogue than usual to convey the story, with rehearsals for the acting parts beginning in



Playing the older generation are Katrina Hartman on left, and Karis Myres. They communicate via a magical phone Photos by Gail Bullen



The time-traveling DeLorean flashes its lights and revs its engines at appropriate times during the show. Parents Scott Rau and James Doran built the elaborate prop.



Performing a piece about the pressure of social media are, from left: Olivia Joyner, Katarina Hartmann, Gianna Doran, Sienna Zimmermann, Dria Hansson, and Alexis Walters.



Guided by Audrey Kassel, the Tiny Tots perform to ‘I see the light.’ From left are Isla Johnson, Kinsley Wong, Jamielynn Wilkins, and Miriam Lisagor.

September. “It was a lot of work and extra time...I’m so proud of them,” she said.

Her favorite dance performance was the Senior Elite Team’s rendition of “Trying,” addressing the pressure young people face on social media.

After Sunday’s show, Zimmerman presented a trophy to graduating student Katarina Hartmann, who portrayed the older Doc in the musical and performed a senior dance solo. “What a way to graduate,” Zimmerman said.

Commenting on the varied costumes, Zimmerman mentioned the challenges

of sizes and costs, crediting Pamela Broussard for successful modifications.

The most poignant moment occurred post-show as Zimmerman thanked the audience for their support, revealing doubts about holding the recital after her husband Soeren Zimmerman’s severe motorcycle accident in July. Dance instructor Maddy Carges enlisted past students to cover Zimmerman’s classes, allowing her and their daughter Sierra to stay with him at the hospital.

“I will be forever thankful for all of our friends



A new generation heads ‘Back to the Future 2023’ when the Murieta Dance Company presents its annual recital on Dec. 9 and 10 in Murieta Plaza. From left are Quinn McWayne, David Schneider, Diya Khari, Giuliana Lai and Dria Hanson.



Dancing as the ‘Jet Set’ are, from left: Gemma Schneider, Payten Broussard, Chloe Newman, Ally Abernethy, Inez Kessler, and Jema Nauman.



Dance Company Director Doreen Zimman expresses her thanks to the many volunteers who helped pull together the recital.



Performing to ‘A Friend Like Me’ are, from left: Layla Essaff, Cassandra Goodson, Aubrey Little, Aspen Waters, MacKenzie Long, Indiana Pilliken, Leia Hannum, and Kinley Kindell.

and family who got us through this,” she said.

Zimmerman directed and choreographed this year’s production, alongside choreographers Maddy Carges, Tava Anderson, Rylie Hartman, Sienna Zimmerman, and Sabrina Chase along with vocal coach Laurel Robbins Goodson. Jeremy “JT”

Turner emceed the production, with Wyatt Gaylor, James Doran, Scott Rau, and Soeren Zimmerman handling lights, sound, and stage props.

Before the recital and during intermission, attendees could enjoy beer, wine, and other refreshments, place a bid in the silent auction or purchase flowers and

Murieta Dance merchandise.

Zimmerman began teaching with 18 students 11 years ago at the Murieta Health Club. Now she has 120 students. She now runs her own studio in Murieta Plaza, with students participating in competitions throughout the year, earning first-place wins and recognitions. ★



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Sirens blare and red and blue lights illuminate the scene as a procession of eight emergency vehicles winds its way through Rancho Murieta. The Santa and Sirens parade made its way to the South on December 20 and the North on December 21. In the left photo, spectators near the RMA Building joyfully wave to Santa Claus. Meanwhile, the right photo captures Santa, his sleigh, and the reindeer receiving a lift from an old Florin Fire Department truck. Noteworthy participants included four rigs from the Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District (which absorbed Florin Fire), three from the Sacramento Sheriff's Office, and one from the Rancho Murieta Community Services District Security Department. *Photos by Gail Bullen* ★



## Continued from page 1

“We will continue to function as efficiently as we can, for as long as we can, until we are at the point when we make that decision that it is the appropriate to initiate the bankruptcy process,” Dutton said.

That timing will be dependent on the attorney. "When he says quite clearly that you are not going to stay afloat for whatever amount of time, that will help us determine where that financial point is," he said.

In additional action at the meeting, the board elected officers. Dutton will serve another term as president. Bill Armstrong is vice president, Daniel Klaff, treasurer, and Walter Kim, secretary. "I'm looking forward to working with this board," Dutton said. "They have the best interests of the club at heart."

The board is considering bankruptcy so the club could be sold to a new owner who would make operational and capital improvements. Qualified buyers are interested in

the club but only if it is free of successor liability. The club's main liabilities are the cost of withdrawing from a union pension trust fund and a lawsuit settlement of \$420,000.

A favorable ruling from a bankruptcy judge is the only hope of eliminating successor liability. A new provision in the law makes it faster and cheaper to file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

The club is unusual because it doesn't own the two golf courses or the clubhouse and leases them from Rancho Murieta Properties. Carol Anderson Ward, the owner of the Murieta Equestrian Center, leads that investment group.

The lease is the club's major asset and expires in 2028. Under bankruptcy, the lease balance would have some value so that the club would get a small amount of money for it. That would clear the lease so Rancho Murieta Properties could sell the property.

Ward attended the town hall as an audience member. She told the crowd

she is interviewing prospective buyers with the means to make substantial improvements including a swimming pool. She would even consider a proposal to sell the hotel and its condominium lots as part of the deal. Ward will also ask the buyer to retain the current employees.

Presenters at the town hall highlighted the opportune timing for selling the club, citing willing buyers, landlord support, excellent course conditions, increased membership, and heightened economic activity both inside and outside the gates.

While some audience members advocated for all residents inside the gates to contribute to the club's support, presenters explained that, despite their agreement, it wasn't a feasible option.

*(Refer to a separate story in this issue for an explanation of why the Rancho Murieta Association board won't seek financial support from its members for the club.)* ★

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## A photograph showing a long row of white, roll-up door storage units (lockers) in an outdoor setting. The units are arranged in a line, and the scene is brightly lit by sunlight, casting shadows on the ground. The units have a corrugated metal appearance and are set against a clear blue sky.

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# CSD Board Discusses Finances, Tracking System, Union Talks

**By Gail Bullen**  
**River Valley Times Reporter**

**RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG)** - Despite a light agenda, the Rancho Murieta Community Services District Board considered several notable topics when the directors met on Dec. 20.

- The financial report included an update about the completion of the long overdue 2020/21 audit. Instead of writing off an audit adjustment of \$123,000, which is the final task, the staff asked for more time to “clean up a tangled mess” to ensure the fund balances are correct going forward.
  - The staff has developed new data tracking tools to better manage requests for information including requests under the Public Records Act. The district has received 149 public record requests since 2019 and has spent more than \$66,000 answering them.
  - A tentative agreement between the district and employees represented by a union that included wage increases and other issues was rejected just before the meeting. Although the bargaining unit consists of 35 full and part-time employees, only five are union members and were able to vote on the agreement. The other employees had no say.
  - The security report touched on many interesting topics including two recent restaurant burglaries, abandoned cats, and an adult doorbell ditcher. See the separate story in this issue.
- In other business, the board approved a new IT position and approved a new investment policy.

### Financial Report

Director Stephen Booth asked why General Manager Mimi Morris and Mark Matulich, the director of finance and administration, hadn’t followed his prior suggestion to write off a \$123,000 audit adjustment and take the lumps from the auditor to finally wrap up the long overdue 2020/21 audit that has been promised to the community for many months.

In explaining why, Morris described the 2020/21 finance year as a “tangled mess”. Matulich, who is a CPA, said from an accounting standpoint, the year had been “out of whack.” Both assured the board that only a few items remain to be researched and reviewed with the auditors.

Matulich said it was important to close out 2020/21 fiscal year with a good set of numbers so the district will have a good foundation moving forward into the subsequent audits. He told Booth they should be finished by the next board meeting.

“One thing I can commit to is that when this one is done, it is going to be right,” Matulich said.

Audience member Mike Martel, a past CSD board member, told Morris and Matulich that he thought they were doing a marvelous job. But he also asked when the district’s financial problems began, if there had been negligence, and who was responsible.

Morris said it was a complicated question and would involve speculation since it happened before she was hired in May. But it appears it began in 2019 after “very knowledgeable” employees left the district. The employees coming in behind them didn’t have the same ability.

“It was just sort of negligent, and (it was) bad, bad bookkeeping,” Morris said.

(Continuous turnover in CSD accounting also contributed to problems.)

Martel said that preserving institutional knowledge is a good reason why CSD should begin appointing residents to its committees because they would stay on when staff turned over.

Booth asked Morris to place three financial items on the agenda for the January meeting. First was his observation that the 2022/23 and the 2023/24 budgets don’t match, second was that the 2023/24 budget doesn’t show a \$250,000 transfer from property taxes to the security budget, and the third was the 38.9% administrative allocation to security in the 2023/24 budget. Booth indicated that figure was too high.

### Information Request Tracking

Morris said that staff has been developing basic data tracking tools to better manage requests for information being made to the district including correspondence, general inquiries and requests Public Records Act. Since 2019, the district has received 149 public record requests. The majority were made in 2021 and 22, and nine came in during 2023. One request alone encompassed 4,500 emails that had to be reviewed and redacted.

Morris said the cost of review by an outside law firm came to more than \$56,000, and the cost of staff time to work on PRAs has been over \$10,000. The district still hadn’t been billed by the district’s counsel for its PRA work.

“Staff understands the conditions that led to so many requests for information and hopes to restore confidence in district operations so as to reduce the cost burden of these inquiries in the future,” Morris said.

The district’s response time to inquiries probably drew justifiable criticism, she added. However, given the volume, the district didn’t have the mechanism to evaluate them, especially in the summer of 2022. Morris said new tracking system will show every stage in the process. “The goal is to make it clear



**Image shows a section of artificial turf covering a manhole. The photo was included in the utilities report delivered at the Rancho Murieta Community Services District meeting on Dec. 20.** Photos courtesy of CSD Board



**Image shows the open manhole, the cover, and some of the matted roots found inside.**



**General Manager Mimi Morris explains a new data tracking tool to better manage all information requests made to the district.**



**Director of Administration Mark Matulich explains what is preventing the completion of the 2020/21 audit.**

about why some of these responses will take a while,” she said.

Booth commended Morris and her staff for developing the tracking tool. “I think it is a good step forward in providing greater transparency and accountability to our ratepayers,” he said.

### Union Negotiations

Morris had placed a three-year tentative agreement between the district and its unionized employees on the agenda for board approval. It included more rewarding longevity pay, a more specific drug policy, and wage increases. However, she found out before the meeting that union members had rejected the agreement. “So, we will be going back to the drawing board with them,” she said.

Morris and Director Randy Jenco had negotiated the agreement with a union representative and two union member employees, who had agreed to it.

Morris said that the bargaining unit consists of 35 full and part-time employees. However, only five of them belong to the union, and they were the only ones who could vote.

Because of the U.S. Supreme Court Janis decision in 2018, members of a bargaining unit aren’t required to join the union. Morris said they noticed that many CSD employees dropped their union memberships in February and March.

“But then some of these people realized they didn’t get a vote,” she said. “So now they are asking to be brought back in because the action impacted everyone.”

### In Other Business:

- Operations Director Michael Fritschi reported that when utility employees investigated a sewer complaint near Playa Del Rey, they unearthed a manhole covered with 12 inches of artificial turf. After opening the cover, they found an extensive mass of roots inside.
  - The board approved a job description for an information technology (IT) manager. Morris said the district pays at least \$7,500 a month for contracted IT services. She said she hopes to add a part-time position to handle the work at less than the current cost with much improved service.
  - The board approved a revised investment policy that will allow the district to use an investment pool (California Asset Management Program) that will pay a higher rate of return than the pool that has been used.
  - Morris reported the Communications Committee is working on a strategy to restore the community’s confidence in the district.
  - The board declared five district vehicles with extensive mileage as surplus so they can be sold.
  - Morris said she moved 120 boxes of old records into the office to end the monthly expense of a storage unit. Staff will review the records to see which can be destroyed per the district’s retention policy.
- The board’s next regular meeting will be held at 5 p.m. on Jan. 17. ★

# Cosumnes River Levee District to Get Free Help From Feds, State

*Continued from page 1*

Dillard Road in Wilton and Freeman Road off Grant Line Road in Sheldon. The funding to maintain the levees at a 10-year flood standard comes from an assessment district that generates only \$514,000 a year.

### Corps survey

During his engineer’s report, Patrick Ervin said that he, attorney Rebecca Smith, President Brian Takamori, and Trustee Leland Schneider have been talking to two representatives from the Corps and DWR about participating in a pilot study. Over the next 10 years, the Corps plans to put together a national database of all private levees in the nation with an assessment of their conditions and risks.

Smith said RD 800 was included in the pilot study with several other small districts in California after a district in Louisiana dropped out. “We just happened to be in the right place at the right time,” she said.

Ervin said the Corps has limited resources since it is a pilot program and could only commit to two days of inspections on the levees. “So, obviously with this district, they can’t do the entire thing in two days because it is too extensive,” he said. “What we have settled on with them is the north side levees in the interest of time.”

After the survey, the Corps will produce a report outlining the deficiencies in the RD 800 north levees with an estimate of what it will take to get them up to par.

Director Mark Hite asked whether up to par would mean a 100-year flood standard. Smith said their contacts at the Corps and DWR don’t expect to get anywhere close to that. The goal of the risk assessment and recommended mitigations “may be bringing everything up to a five of 10 years,” she said.

Nonetheless, Ervin and Smith both said the Corps will be providing the district “with a bunch of free” data that it has never had before. While the district has some levee locations that have been surveyed during repairs, it will now have a breadth of survey data it never had before. The Corps survey was expected to take place mid-January.

President Brian Takamori asked if any of the Corps work would help the south side of the river, where Wilton and parts of Sloughhouse are located.

Smith said their DWR representative also had

been pushing the Corps to do both sides of the river, but the Corps will want to preserve their resources. If the Corps surveyed both sides, “It would cover less than the entire system,” Ervin added.

Smith said the board could use the \$500,000 state planning grant that State Senator Roger Niello secured for the district in 2023 to do some of the same work on the south side. “You will want to maximize that because half a million dollars will go really fast,” she said.

Schneider said another part of the issue is access, which logistically is easier on the north side of the river. He said the Corps is considering a drone survey “So they would be able to grab both sides, but that is not a guarantee,” the trustee said. “Another thought was that once we get them here, they might want to keep on going.”

### DWR modeling

Turning to the DWR plan to model the river, Ervin said he was going to meet with three of the developers after the meeting to show them to some sites for ground verification of their model. However, because of the difficulty of access on the south (Wilton) side due to recent rains, they would view some of it from the north bank.

“I said if you guys want to walk 1,000 feet through trees and mud, go ahead. But I think we can see some off the sites from the opposite side.”

The engineer will also take them to the huge Bradley Road break on the north side. It’s been repaired.

Ervin said DWR expects to wrap up the hydraulic model by February. He hopes it will include additional elements such as the hydrology of Deer Creek.

“One of the things we talked about in the meeting is to be able to use that model as a planning tool to better predict flows... focusing our resources on raising the elevation and clearing (the channel as much as we can,” he said.

Trustee Dave Utterback told Ervin said he should talk to DWR about dredging the massive amount of sand and sediment that has accumulated in the river channel. “They don’t need to raise it, they just clean it out,” he said.

Ervin told him that DWR can use a special kind of aerial flight equipped with “something like a green laser” that can penetrate the water and see the sentiment, “which is crazy. I didn’t even know

that existed,” he said.

Ervin also touched on potential for future funding. He said the DWR representative with whom they have been working was a strong advocate of RD 800 going through the Corps process. That will mean the district can now quote the Corps as saying the district levees need a lot of work, which the district has been telling the state for years with no effect. Hopefully, that will translate into DWR regularly funding RD 800 levees.

“It’s all good,” Irvin added. “The state is now putting more resources into the district than they have forever.”

### Finances

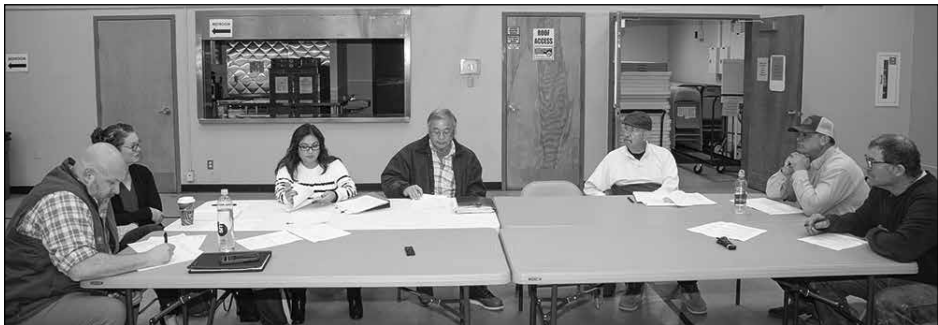
The financial report by accountant Perla Tzintzun-Garabay made it evident why the district is in dire need of more funding. She said the updated amount owed to the Bank of Stockton is \$7,475,000. It had been \$7,975,000 until the board authorized a \$500,000 payment in November. Most of that money came from the National Resource Conservation Services (NRCS) a division of the Department of Agriculture.

NRCS agreed to partially fund two repairs on Lee School Road and Fig Road after the 2023 storms. Of the \$1.9 million cost to fix both levees, NRCS reimbursed the district about 75%, Ervin is seeking reimbursement from the California Office of Emergency Services to pay the bulk of the district’s 25% cost share.

Ervin also reported he had nearly completed the voluminous submittals required to seek approximately \$5 million in FEMA reimbursement for another \$5.5 million in repairs. However, the district has no guarantee of getting the funds. In the past, FEMA refused to fund a levee repair project that it had previously approved.

Funding for district operations comes from an assessment district that generates only \$514,000 a year. RD 800 was already in the red about \$2 million before the January 2023 storms.

The district borrowed more money to make extensive emergency repairs after the new storms broke the levee in three locations and caused massive erosion at a dozen levees on both sides of the river. The total cost of the flood repairs was \$6.5 million. ★



**Discussing the new federal and state help at their meeting are, from left, engineer Patrick Ervin, attorney Rebecca Smith, bookkeeper Perla Tzintzun-Garabay, President Brian Takamori, and Trustees Mark Hite, Leland Schneider and David Utterback. Trustee Jack Kautz was absent.** Photo by Gail Bullen



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# RMA President Explains the Case Against Country Club Dues

**By Gail Bullen**  
**River Valley Times**  
**Reporter**

**RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG)** - Although the dire financial straits facing the Rancho Murieta Country Club wasn't on the agenda when the Rancho Murieta Association (RMA) Board met on Dec. 19, President Scott Adams still discussed the issue during the public session.

During his president's report about the executive session, Adams said the board had discussed the association's involvement with the Rancho Murieta Country Club (RMCC) and the club's current financial situation with the possibility of bankruptcy.

Adams said many residents have asked him and other directors if RMA members can begin paying mandatory dues to the country club or even buy it to keep it afloat. "I'm going to elaborate here because these questions continually come up," he said.

Adams first addressed possible involvement by RMA at the club's annual



**President Scott Adams addresses the dire financial situation facing Rancho Murieta Country Club when speaking at the Rancho Murieta Association Board meeting on Dec. 19.** Photo by Gail Bullen

meeting in November. "I described the hurdles facing RMA to require RMA members to financially support of the Rancho Murieta Country Club," he said.

The association wasn't involved 20 years ago when every homeowner was required to pay dues directly to the country club for the privilege of owning a home in Rancho Murieta, Adams said. That was voted out, and country club membership became voluntary.

Adams said that

requiring RMA members to pay country club dues would necessitate a change in the CC&Rs. He said 60% vote of all the rooftops in the community would be required, not a majority of 60% of members voting.

The CC&R revision would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, Adams said. Then, members would have to vote on increasing their dues.

"At this time, the RMA Board believes that spending member money on a vote that won't pass is an unnecessary cost to RMA members," he said.

On the other hand, the governing documents allow members to petition for a vote if they gather signatures from 5% of the members, approximately 140 votes. "If they presented the signatures, RMA would be required to go through with the vote," he said.

Adams didn't address whether the association could buy the club.

See a separate story in this issue about other happenings at the RMA Board meeting. ★

## COMMUNITY BRIEFS

### Kiwanis Crab Feed Tickets Go On Sale

The 10th Annual Crab Feed sponsored by The Kiwanis Club of Rancho Murieta's is fast approaching. The club's largest fundraiser of the year will be held on Saturday, Feb. 3, at 6 p.m. at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church Social Hall on Cantova Way. Dine-in and drive-through tickets are \$70 each and can be purchased with cash, check or credit card. Dine-in tickets are limited and may still be available at the time of publication, but they can only be purchased at our in-person sales table at the Local Bean Cafe on Saturday, Jan.13, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. if dine-in tickets remain. Drive-through tickets may be purchased at the Local Bean until Jan. 13 or purchased online until Jan. 28 at [rmkiwanis.org](http://rmkiwanis.org) or by contacting Jeannette Edwards at 408-515-2636. The Crab Feed is a fun evening of a delicious crab meal that includes shrimp, salad, pasta, rolls, dessert, a silent auction, a dessert auction, and a huge and extravagant raffle. We are currently seeking raffle and silent auction items, along with gourmet desserts for the dessert silent auction. Raffle items can be restaurant or retail gift cards, new items, service gift cards, art, custom pieces, food-themed baskets, etc. Silent auction items are extra-special offers of travel opportunities, overnight stays, sports memorabilia, tickets to games, and artisanal items. Our dessert auction of gourmet desserts serving eight people is a popular part of our Crab Feed. Please get in touch with Bonnie at 916-502-3260 about raffle and auction items. Funds raised support our youth and community-centered programs, including college scholarships, sponsoring youth

sports and scouting, teacher appreciation gift cards at Cosumnes River Elementary School, Kids' Fishing Day, and service and leadership clubs at CRES and Pleasant Grove and Sheldon High Schools.

### Rm Blood Drive Slated Jan. 22

The Rancho Murieta Women's Club has slated its next blood drive on Monday, Jan. 22 from noon to 6 p.m. at the Rancho Murieta Community Church, 14670 Cantova Way, Rancho Murieta. Appointments to donate can be made online at [donors.vitalant.org](http://donors.vitalant.org) by using blood drive code SMFM053 or by calling Vitalant at 877-258-4825. Walk-ins will be accommodated if space permits. Donors will be entered into a drawing for a \$50 for the Backyard restaurant donated. donated by Carole Thames of Town & Country Real Estate. All donors will receive a coupon for a free appetizer at the Backyard. Eat well and drink plenty of water prior to donating, and please bring a photo ID. If you have eligibility questions call Vitalant at 877-258-4825 or Vitalant.org.

### Hypnotist Slated At Women's Club Jan. 24 Luncheon

Master hypnotist Dr. David Hill will entertain at the Rancho Murieta Women's Club luncheon on Wednesday, Jan. 24. He has entertained audiences with a hilarious comedy hypnosis show more than 20 years. The menu includes a choice of short ribs or vegetable ratatouille, polenta, and apple crisp dessert. The cost is \$35 for members and \$40 for nonmembers. Mail your reservation to RMWC Luncheon, Rancho Murieta Women's Club, Post Office Box

527, Rancho Murieta, CA 95683. The reservation deadline is Jan. 15.

### Creating Wildlife Habitats Is Garden Club Topic

Master Gardener Roxy Jones will be sharing insights on creating wildlife-friendly environments during her presentation at the River Valley Garden Club's meeting on January 23. The event will take place at the RMA Building, starting with a social hour at 6:30 p.m. The general meeting and the speaker's presentation will follow at 7 p.m. First-time attendees can enjoy the meeting for free. Join us for an informative evening on fostering nature-friendly spaces.

### Mardi Gras Celebration Feb. 9

Please join us for a Mardi Gras celebration on Friday February 9, 2024 at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church in our social hall at 14673 Cantova Way from 5:30 to 9:30 pm. Enjoy a meal of jambalaya/rice, ribs, sausage, salad and dessert. There will be music for dancing and a raffle. Tickets are \$30 per person and can be purchased at St. Vincent de Paul church before and after Saturday 5:00 pm Mass and before and after Sunday 9:00 am Mass. Or call Karen Mauro at 916 608-1647. Gather your family and friends, and wear your Mardi Gras attire for a fun filled evening.

### Talent show for kids slated in Wilton Feb. 23

The Cosumnes Parks and Recreation Council is seeking entries for a talent show that will be held at the Wilton Community Center on Feb. 23 at 6 p.m. at the Wilton Community Center. Kids from kindergarten through six grade will be showing off their talent. Email [wilton@saccounty.gov](mailto:wilton@saccounty.gov) for an application. ★

## SECURITY LOGS

*Following is a summary of activity for the Rancho Murieta Community Services District Security Department for the following dates. Note: these log entries are condensed. For full security log details, go to the CSD website at [www.rmcsd.com](http://www.rmcsd.com). A quick link to the security logs is on the home page.*

RP = Reporting Person  
GOA = Gone on Arrival  
UTL = Unable to Locate  
BOLO = Be on Look Out  
NFI = No Further Information  
QOA = Quiet on Arrival  
HBD = Had Been Drinking

### Rancho Murieta

#### Dec. 15

- Two extra patrols
- Vandalism, 1:33 p.m., possible vandals on Natchez Court in Village, UTL, GOA.

#### Dec. 16

- Three extra patrols.
- Stop sign enforcement, 6:27 a.m. Murieta Parkway and De La Cruz Drive, one citation.
- Animal complaint, 7:02 p.m. Verona Drive, barking dog, unable to locate animal because of lack of proper address from RP.
- Gas leak, 9:30 p.m. Reynosa Drive, a passerby noticed an odor of gas. Sac Metro determined the source was an empty propane tank located outside the residence.

- Noise complaint, 10:30 p.m. Zancada Court, report of a loud party. Patrol made contact and was advised they would comply. Further noise complaints will be referred to SSD.

#### Dec. 17

- Three extra patrols.
- Overnight parking enforcement, 3:07 a.m. RM North and South, three citations.
- Burglary, 1:41 p.m. Follow up on burglary report at Naan King Restaurant. SDD advised.
- Juvenile delinquency, 4:50 p.m. Hole 4 North golf course, report of juveniles drinking recklessly, GOA.
- Loud explosion, 4:50 p.m. Lake Chesbro, possible fireworks. No activity was found.

#### Dec. 18

- Two extra patrols.
- Overnight parking enforcement, 4:18 a.m. RM South and North, three citations.

#### Dec. 19

- Three extra patrols.
- Overnight parking enforcement, 3:08 a.m. Colina Lane, two citations.
- Accident, 1:05p.m. Hit and run in front of Tractor Supply, truck versus water main enclosure in parking lot, A red Dodge flatbed truck was seen leaving the accident scene. Referred to SSD and CHP.
- Speeding complaint, 11:01 p.m. Murieta South Parkway and Jackson Highway, UTL.

#### Dec. 20

- Two extra patrols.
- Overnight parking

enforcement, 3:41 a.m. Topspin Way and Trinidad Court, two citations.

#### Dec. 21

• Juvenile delinquency, 5:10 p.m. Bel Air Plaza, report of juvenile delinquency that had just occurred at the Murieta Inn. Patrol located two juveniles between Bel Air and Tractor Supply. Both were uncooperative when interviewed. Tractor Supply manager contacted patrol and said the juveniles had shoplifted candy from the store. Patrol contacted a parent, who arrived on the scene and reimbursed Tractor Supply for the theft.

#### Dec. 22

- Reckless driving, 8:48 a.m. Calero Reservoir, patrol saw a resident doing donuts in the mud near the new boat ramp. Patrol advised the resident to stop and contacted RMA compliance to see if a citation is authorized. The resident was issued a citation for noxious activities.
- Welfare check, 11:48 a.m. RMA Maintenance Yard, a resident who had permission to be there wasn't able to leave because his clicker didn't work because the access code had been changed. No welfare check was needed because of miscommunication with dispatch. The Resident left after opening the gate.

#### Dec. 23

- One patrol check.

#### Dec. 24

- One patrol check.
- Trespassing, 9:40 p.m. Bermuda Count, report of juveniles had jumped the fence to access the 10th hole on the south golf course. Patrol was unable to locate them.

#### Dec. 25

- One extra patrol.

#### Dec. 26

- One extra patrol.
- Accident, 1:30 p.m. Lago Drive inbound gate. Video surveillance shows the vehicle knocking off the gate arm, but the driver didn't notify the gate officer. The driver was identified.

#### Dec. 27

- One extra patrol.
- Patrol detail, 4:11 p.m. a contractor's vehicle left The Retreats construction site and proceeded the wrong way out of the community.

#### Dec. 28

- No log.

#### Dec. 29

- Trespassing, 6:42 a.m. El Dorado Savings, male adult sleeping on sidewalk in front of bank. He was advised he was trespassing and had to leave the area. He was advised to go to the local bus stop for shelter and to get a bus ticket if he has no business in Rancho Murieta.

#### Dec. 30

- Three extra patrols.
- Burglary, 8:13 a.m. Cantova Way, Murieta South Storage & RV. Patrol observed 20-foot section of fence leaning away from entrance.

Contacted manager to have fence repaired and to review video to identify the suspect. It wasn't known if anything missing.

- Accident, 8:40 p.m. Camino Del Lago, RP said vehicle hit a tree near his resident and left scene. The driver came back and reached an agreement with the RP. No injuries.

#### Dec. 31

- Three extra patrols.

#### Jan. 1 - Jan. 6

- No log.

#### Jan. 7

- Four vacations checks.

#### Jan. 8

- Burglary follow-up, 9 a.m. El Gallo Restaurant, business was burglarized between Jan. 6 and 7.
- Gun shots, 9:23 p.m. Lake Calero, upon arrival patrol noticed rapid gunfire north of Lake Calero in area of Latrobe road. No activity seen around lake. SSD was advised.
- Citation, 8:55 pm. Stonehouse Park, patrol unable to locate the driver of Ford Mustang left unattended at the park.
- Suspicious activity, 9:45 p.m. Lindero Lane, report of unknown person knocking on window. GOA. UTL..

### Wilton Fire

- 36 medical aids between Dec. 15 and Jan. 2

#### Dec. 15

- Smoke odor investigation. 1: 59 am. 9895 Stablegate Road.
- Investigation, 4:36 p.m. 10370 Reigle Road.

#### Dec. 16

- Outbuilding fire, 8:48 p.m. 9161 Cid Lane.

#### Dec. 17

- Structure fire, 12:42 p.m. 6407 Lobo Drive, RM, unfounded.

#### Dec. 19

- Structure fire, 11:14 a.m. 714 Benteen Way, Galt.

#### Dec. 20

- Accident, 2:29 p.m. Highway 99 and Dillard Road.

#### Dec. 24

- Public assistance, 10:38 a.m. 11456 Colony Road.

#### Dec. 26

- Internal alarm, 4:13 p.m. 12860 Riding Trail.

#### Dec. 27

- Accident, 9:12 p.m. Highway 99 and Arno Road.

#### Dec. 29

- Accident, 9:06 p.m. Highway 99.

#### Dec. 31

- Structure fire, 3:43 p.m. 13811 Montfort Ave.

#### Jan. 2

- Gas leak, 12:18 a.m. 10689 Gay Road.

### Sacramento County Sheriff's Office

- No incidents reported. ★





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# Speeding, Vendor Rule, Holiday Lights, Country Club Are RMA Topics

By Gail Bullen  
River Valley Times  
Reporter

**RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG)** - After beginning the session with Christmas cheer, the Rancho Murieta Association (RMA Board went on to consider three touchy topics at the Dec. 19 meeting.

Preliminary data captured by four new Lidar cameras shows that Rancho Murieta has a significant speeding problem.

The board adopted a revised rule about vendor moving violations that will make them far less onerous on residents, but RMA members will remain responsible if their delivery person speeds or blows a stop sign.

President Scott Adams explained why the board won't ask RMA members to begin paying dues to the Rancho Murieta Country Club to keep it solvent. See the separate story in this issue.

The Recreation Committee awarded prizes to 50 winners in the 2023 Holiday Lights Contest.

Other meeting topics included the election of new board officers and committee chairs, a new SMUD fee for street lights, and approval of an additional \$3,000 to finally get delivery of new dashboard cameras for the compliance cars.

### Speeding

After installing four new speed enforcement cameras earlier this year, the staff turned them on Oct. 23 to begin a 90-day grace period to let residents know when they were driving over the 25 MPR speed limit. The cameras are mounted on poles on Murieta Parkway, Pera Drive, Murieta South Parkway, and Riverview Park

Director Tom Reimers, who chairs the Compliance Committee, released some preliminary results that showed the cameras captured 817 speeding violations in November. "I think we have a speeding problem in this community," he said.

Of that number, 308 were residents. Hart said they were sent warnings. The remaining speeders were contractors, delivery drivers, guests, a reported school bus driver, and attendees at special events at the country club.

The November report showed 24 vehicles were traveling at 34 to 35 mph, 491 at 36 to 40 mph, 69 at 41 to 45 mph, and 12 at 46 to 50 mph.

Adams said the board will discuss the issue at more length at the February meeting. "On Jan. 22, these are going to start to become real citations and not just warnings," he said.

Audience member John Haviland asked whether the statistics could be published. "I don't think our community understands the magnitude of the speeding," he said. "I think it would open everyone's eyes.

Hart told him that the board wanted to do that, and he was accumulating the information for his February meeting report. Hart said the camera captured more than 900 violations in the first two weeks with many driving over 50 mph, and several over 60 mph.

"This is something we've got to take some action on, and we will publish on it," he said.

### Vendor Rule

The board unanimously approved a revision to a non-architectural rule on vendor moving violations and fines that drastically significantly reduced the fines. The Governing Documents Committee, chaired by Adams, has been working on the rule for months after a referral from the Compliance Committee. A public review



Audience member John Haviland urges the board to publicize 'the magnitude of the speeding problem' inside the community. Photos by Gail Bullen



Diane Critchlow, one of 50 winners in the Holiday Lights Contest, accepts her sign from the elf (Director Danny Carrillo) and Santa Claus (Director Tom Reimers) at the Rancho Murieta Association Board meeting on Dec. 19.

of the rule change has been completed.

Director Danny Carrillo asked Adams if a resident still must pay a vendor's fine under the rule change. Adams told him that the association has no jurisdiction over a vendor, and the CC&Rs say a resident is responsible for all of his "invitees."

The CC&Rs were written when vendors were going to multiple homes, which is even more prevalent today. Residents complain when they end up being responsible for a vendor who has gone to 10 homes. However, it isn't practical to split up the ticket among 10 people because it won't work administratively, Adams said.

Under the previous rule, vendor violations would accumulate against the resident. For example, if the resident already had a speeding violation, a vendor violation would count as a second strike with a \$100 fine that would increase to \$200 for a third.

Adams said the rule change significantly reduces the fines, with the first citation zero and the next one at \$25. Nor will the citations accumulate against the residents.

Adams suggested that residents warn their vendors they won't use them anymore if they get another citation and ask them to pay the fine. "You can't write a rule around the CC&Rs," he said.

Adams said his committee received seven comments from residents about the rule change. Some wanted it to apply to guests as well, while others didn't. Some didn't want the rule to change at all.

Adams said the association faces liability if it denies entry to vendors. An extreme example took place 11 years ago when a hospice worker was caught speeding twice and blew a stop sign. Another example could be an HVAC company driver speeding to a service request to fix an air conditioner for an elderly couple in hot weather.

"Does RMA address egregious issues? Yes," Adams said. "Does RMA address these high levels of speed. The answer is yes."

However, it is impractical to expect a gate officer to track which vendors have been denied entry when vendors make up about 50,000 of the 180,000 to 200,000 non-residents who come through the gates every year.

Audience member Melinda Martel asked if she could check to see whether a vendor had multiple violations. Hart told her that no such list exists.

"But that's something that we're certainly going

to have a discussion about," Hart said.

### Holiday Lights Contest

Although she usually brings up the rear in making committee reports, Adams moved Recreation Chair Renee Bechtold to the front of the agenda so she could announce 50 winners of the annual Holiday Lights Contest. "I know you aren't here to watch the entire meeting," Adams told the audience.

More than a dozen of the winners showed up to collect their Visa gift cards and special lawn signs in person. Santa Claus (Director Tom Reimers) and his lead elf (Director Danny Carrillo) presented the prizes.

Bechtold said the preliminary judging was done by members of the community. Then members of the Recreation Committee made the final selection. "It was a very tough decision because there are beautiful homes out there with really amazing decorations," she said

### In Other Business

The board elected officers for 2024 as follows: Adams, president; Tom Reimers, vice-president, Danny Carrillo, secretary; and John Van Doran, treasurer. The board also elected committee chairs.

Chris Childs, who chairs the Finance Committee, said SMUD has notified the association of a \$14,000 fee increase for operating the street lights. The notification came too late to put it into the budget.

The board approved Hart's request to spend an additional \$3,000 for dash-mounted video cameras. RMA actually ordered them in March, but they have never been delivered. Hart said an upgraded model of the camera was in stock. The cameras will be used to document stop sign violations.

Director Patrick O'Hern, who chairs the Architectural Review Committee, said his group had reviewed 402 plans in 2023. He thanked the staff for their hard work.

Adams said the board has been meeting with Bob Keil, the developer of the Residences East near Stonehouse Park, for seven months. Keil is proposing non-paved trails even though RMA cited governing documents and a park committee vote requiring 12-foot asphalt trails "Where the board stands now is where we stood seven months ago," Adams said.

The board's next meeting will be at 6:30 p.m. on Jan. 16. ★

# Doorbell Ditching, Cats, Burglaries Are Security Report Topics

By Gail Bullen  
River Valley Times  
Reporter

**RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG)** - The monthly Rancho Murieta Community Service District (CSD) security operations report usually includes a myriad of interesting details, and the latest edition delivered at the Dec. 20 board meeting wasn't an exception.

Security Chief Kelly Benitez updated the board on seven notable incidents that ranged from an adult doorbell ditcher to commercial area break-ins.

Benitez also covered a half dozen operational issues that ranged from decreased patrol shift coverage to a complaint from a law enforcement officer.

A CSD director also raised an issue about the current security budget.

### Notable Incidents

While doorbell ditching incidents aren't unusual in Rancho Murieta, a first happened on Nov. 15 because the perpetrator was an adult male and not a juvenile. He also was accompanied by two adults in a white golf cart. Benitez showed a video of the incident that was captured by a doorbell camera.

Benitez said juveniles ranging in age from 12 to 15 years in age have rung the victim's doorbell in the middle of the night. "But this latest incident caused her great concern because the suspect was clearly an adult, who she didn't recognize," he said.

The Sacramento County Sheriff's Office was notified, even though security knew deputies wouldn't respond. Benitez said the CSD and Rancho Murieta Association Compliance haven't been able to identify the suspect yet although the video has also been posted on Facebook.

On Nov. 14, a security officer was asked to meet with RMA Compliance to conduct a welfare check on an elderly couple who lived on Ventana Drive. When they couldn't rouse anyone but noticed a strong odor, they contacted the sheriff's office. "The foul odor was due to approximately 25 unattended domestic cats in the home without food or water...Some were eating the other dead cats," Benitez said.

Animal Control rescued most of the cats, according to Benitez. (Animal Control didn't respond until four days

later. The cats were left behind when the elderly couple was taken to a care facility. See the story in the Nov. 24 issue of the River Valley Times.)

Rancho Murieta resident Beth Buderus, who moderates a Facebook page for lost and found pets, contacted Animal Control to see what happened to the cats. She received an email from William Davidson, the supervising animal control officer, who said they had cleared most of the cats from the home.

"Unfortunately, they started to die on us once at the shelter, and it was found they had pan leuk (panleukopenia – feline distemper), so the remaining cats were euthanized," Davidson wrote.

He explained the disease is extremely contagious and is deadly in a shelter environment. He added that they would have reached out to the owners, but none of the cats had microchips.

Continuing with his report, Benitez said area businesses seem to get hit this time of year. He reported that Go 4 Pizza and the Naan King restaurant both had been burglarized, with the cash register taken from both businesses. He also talked to a contractor whose bobcat tractor was stolen from the construction site for the new veterinary clinic.

"He had left it there overnight, He didn't have insurance and he didn't have a tracker on it," Benitez said. "So, he just lost \$20,000."

The security chief also related another incident involving several college kids home for the break and getting into trouble. One of them tried to squeeze into a child's swing at Stonehouse Park, and his friends had to cut him out.

Benitez also said CSD had helped RMA with a wildlife incident but didn't elaborate. (After a country club employee encountered a mountain lion, she showed others an image of an African Lion on her phone, saying it was the animal she had seen. The report caused some consternation for a time. See the story in the Nov. 24 issue of the River Valley Times.)

The security chief also reported that two bikes had been stolen from the lost and found at the North Gate. "The video worked great, so we were able to identify the suspect," he said. The area was later secured with a padlock.

### Operations

Benitez reported that 38 out of 90 patrol shifts weren't covered in November. That was higher than usual (about 30) because of employees taking sick leave and vacation time.

He said security will hold off purchasing a dashboard camera CSD had planned to buy in conjunction with RMA because of the uncertainty of the security budget.

However, at the recommendation of President Tim Maybee, he ordered new trauma kits for all CSD vehicles. It was prompted by the double shooting at the equestrian center when a patrol officer rendered first aid.

Benitez also reported that a law enforcement officer had complained about getting a speeding ticket when he was on his way to a call in his unmarked patrol vehicle. "Our response was that we didn't know you were in a police car," he said. "So, if you want to violate the rules of the road, turn on your lights or sirens so our guys don't give you a ticket."

Benitez said RMA will decide what to do about the citation.

Benitez also said he had worked with Lt. Greg Coauette, who lives in the community, to resolve some issues about when the sheriff's office should pick up lost and found items from the North Gate.

Security also worked with RMA on a complaint that contractors were coming inside the gates before 7 a.m. A previous RMA general manager had permitted employees to come in early for a safety briefing, but they were starting work instead.

### Security Budget

After Benitez concluded his report, Director Stephen Booth questioned the security budget. He said the administrative allocation this year was for \$637,227, which represents a hit of 38.9% to the operational budget. "Kelly, no wonder you have vacant positions and can't cover patrol shifts," he told Benitez. General Manager Mimi Morris told Booth she was in "complete agreement" and said the distribution of administrative costs must be recalibrated according to the level of administrative effort that is being utilized. "We are kind of baffled how it landed on security at that heavy level," she said. ★



A surveillance camera shows a man ringing a doorbell at night and then running away. A video of the Nov. 15 doorbell ditching incident was shown at the Rancho Murieta Community Services District Board meeting on Dec. 20. Photo courtesy of a Rancho Murieta Resident



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## Letter to Editor: A Modest Proposal

By Jay Hacker

As the price of meat is out of reach for some of our populous, and we in Rancho Murieta are being overrun by wildlife (notably Deer and Turkeys), I propose that every golfer be permitted to carry a shotgun in his golf bag (in addition to the maximum allowed 14 clubs).

A limit of 6 Deer and 20 Turkeys per round of golf per golfer would thin out the hoards of garden defiling creatures, and in only a few months we would be down to a few thousand of the skulking, surly varmints. After that we could have a yearly Deer/Turkey hunting golf tournament in order to keep the vermin population to a manageable limit. I know that some golfers would be tempted to fire their shotguns off in their opponent's back swing, and in that case the disturbed golfer would be entitled to place his/her (notice that I am being politically correct) ball 300 yds. down the middle, or if he/she hits the ball further (due to the extra adrenaline induced by the shotgun blast), he/she can play the ball as it lies.

On par 3s the disturbed player would be able to pick his/her ball up and put it on the green, no closer than 10 ft. from the cup.

I am sure that golf cart drivers will be able

to drape the carcasses over the roof of their carts, and in the case of "Real Golfers" (those who walk the course); a cell phone call to the Pro/Gun Shop for a "Game pickup" would be used.

In the case of a ball coming to rest on a dead varmint, the ball could be dropped 2 shotgun Lengths away at no penalty.

A permit to "GolfHunt" would be issued by the Head Pro after instructions as to the proper etiquette of shotguns, and proof of a clean history of no "accidental" shootings of competitors in the past.

Any bagging of cats and dogs would be discouraged (especially when they are in their own back yard).

Obviously we would have an over abundance of meat which could be sold to one of the large Grocery chains, and the profits could be given to the Golf Club to reduce the Club dues.

I am aware that some of the members haven't hunted in a while, and so I propose the driving range could be used as a shooting range after the Golf Ball Pickup Cart is properly armor plated.

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## Wilton Fire Director Al Iaccopucci Recognized For 63 Years of Service



Director Al Iaccopucci is honored for 63 years of service at the Wilton Fire Protection District Board meeting on Dec. 20. He and his family pose with a new sign that will hang at Fire Station 83 on Orange Road. Photos courtesy Renee Mendonca

By Gail Bullen  
River Valley Times  
Reporter

**WILTON, CA (MPG)** - It's not an everyday occurrence for a fire station to be named after an individual. Yet that remarkable honor befell Director Al Iaccopucci at the monthly meeting of Wilton Fire Protection District board meeting on Dec. 20.

Board Chairman Joe Guardino made the surprise announcement. "How do you sum up 63 years of somebody making his community better," he said.

Guardino gestured towards a sizable sign, carried into the room by several of Iaccopucci's family members, bearing the inscription: 'Wilton Fire Protection District - Al Iaccopucci Fire Station 83.' (The station is situated on Orange Road.)

"It's a huge honor to have a firehouse named after you. But I don't think it is enough to thank you for all you have done," Guardino said.

Iaccopucci was one of Guardino's mentors when he joined the Wilton Fire Board.

"You helped me figure things out," he said. "You told me things I wanted to hear and a few I didn't want to hear... But it was all out of your love of this fire district and the community of Wilton."

Iaccopucci joined the district in 1958 as a volunteer firefighter. He was the assistant chief when he retired 47 years later. He was elected to the district's board of directors in 2003, and with one brief hiatus, has continued to serve on the board since then.

Retired Sacramento County Supervisor Don Nottoli, present in the audience, said that he and his former boss, Supervisor Toby Johnson had been friends with Iaccopucci and his wife Helen Iaccopucci for nearly 50 years. Over that time, he has witnessed Iaccopucci's dedication to the community sacrificing many dinners at home and stayed out late at night as a volunteer firefighter. He also faced budgetary challenges at countless board meetings.

"It's what you do in your daily life, the leadership that you have shown, the

inspiration, you provide to others, and just the goodwill," Nottoli said. "This honor reflects what you have meant to the people in this community and how you served them these many years and will continue to serve them."

Touched by the recognition, Iaccopucci said: "It's been a good ride...I've really enjoyed this for 70-odd years, and I am still having fun."

Iaccopucci highlighted that recruiting more local volunteers remains a goal. When he joined the department, so many residents wanted to be volunteers that the department couldn't bring on any more than 50 because of worker's compensation limits. "Now we've got people coming and going," he said.

His wife added a few words. "We've had some good times," Helen Iaccopucci said. "Thank you so very much."

Guardino adjourned the meeting, allowing everyone to eat the celebratory cake and to capture photos of Iaccopucci and his family posing with the new sign

★.

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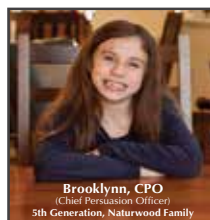
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