

Third Time's the Charm for Kiwanis Farm to Fork Dinner

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Gardening Guru Covers Latest Trends at Club Meeting



KIVER ALLEY IN

40TH YEAR • ISSUE 19

Serving Rancho Murieta, Sloughhouse, Wilton

OCTOBER 11, 2024

Summerfest Enjoyed by Many



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Story and photos

by Gail Bullen

Sherry Carrillo, a member of the nine-person committee that has organized Summerfest since 1999, except during the pandemic, commented on this year's event. Despite an unprecedented October heat wave, she said it went well.

"The Friday night attendance was a lot lighter than last year, but the corno'clock blazing sun. But we had record-breaking attendance Saturday night," she added.

Setting up a full-fledged carnival inside the gates makes Summerfest both unique and extremely convenient for residents. The carnival featured rides ranging from a merry-go-round and swirling strawberries for younger hole tournament was such children to high-velocity

for older kids and adults. Attendees of all ages tested their skills at a dozen carnival booths, where friendly workers eagerly helped them win colorful prizes.

Two new events this vear were trivia night and the cornhole tournament. Summerfest also featured two nights of live entertainment, a lively bingo game, a poker tournament, *Continued on page 2*



Country **Club Has No Buyer Board Delays** Filing of **Bankruptcy**

Story and photo by Gail Bullen **River Valley Times** Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - Although hopes were high in July for a prospective buyer for Rancho Murieta Country Club, the deal has now fallen through, along with the club's plans to file for bankruptcy.

Currently, there is no buyer, but the club is operating financially in the black and can continue as long as nothing catastrophic occurs.

This was the essence of an update that Board President Eric Dutton emailed to members on Oct. 4 and shared with the River Valley Times during an interview on Oct. 7. Dutton has also been serving as the club's interim part-time general manager since December 2023. "We are paying all of our bills. We've got money in the bank. The staff is working extremely hard and doing an absolutely phenomenal job," Dutton said. The report regarding the absence of a buyer came from Gregory Dyer, the CEO of Rancho Murieta Properties (RMP), which owns the two golf courses. Board members discussed his report in detail at their Oct. 3 meeting. "With this updated information, the BOD is considering our options and how best to continue operating in the most effective and efficient way to maintain, and or, improve your member experience," Dutton wrote in his update. "There is no definitive timeline, and things are constantly changing. I am aware that there are numerous rumors floating about daily and rest assured that I will provide updates when there is legitimate information to disseminate." Dutton also said that RMP, the club and a prospective golf club broker held a phone conference on Oct. 4. "We, the Club, will continue to facilitate anything that gets us to the sale of the property, inclusive of the original goal of including a pool and a community center," Dutton wrote.





year in Rancho Murieta, surpassed only by the July 4 celebration.

est community event of the

a hit on Saturday in the 5 attractions like The Zipper

In an earlier update Continued on page 5

Fire Fuel Reduction Starts Soon

PAGE 4



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By Gail Bullen **River Valley Times Reporter**

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - Delayed for more than two years, the Consumes Ladder Fuel Project in and around Rancho Murieta is now expected to begin as soon as Nov. 1.

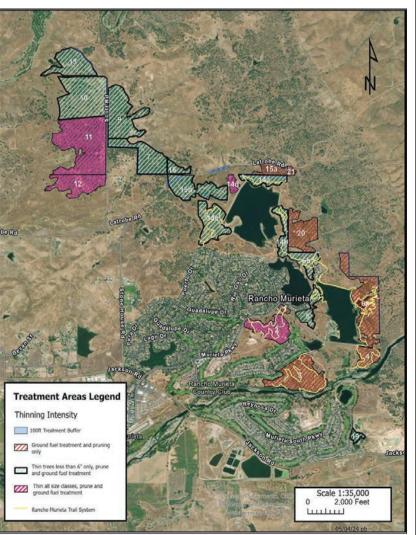
Funded by a \$4.4 million California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) grant, the project aims to treat 937 acres through a range of fuel reduction methods, including thinning and pruning trees, as well as removing ground fuels like downed trees. The goal is to safeguard Rancho Murieta from potential wind-driven wildfires.

Phyllis Banducci, the registered forester contracted to supervise the on-the-ground activities, said she hopes that the three contractors hired by Sacramento County can start work in November or December, depending on weather conditions. "If it rains, then Nov. 1 would be the earliest date that we could start," she said.

Residents walking the trails around the lakes may already notice pink, blue, and white flagging. This flagging indicates areas designated for treatment or protection. The trails will be posted and closed when contractors are working nearby.

Most of the fuel treatment will take place outside the nesting bird season, which typically runs from February through August. All work must be completed before Feb. 2026, according to Banducci.

Of the 937 acres of woodlands slated for mitigation, 40% is within



The map highlights areas around Rancho Murieta where contractors will begin fire fuel reduction efforts as early as Nov. 1. The work, funded by a \$4.4 million CAL FIRE grant, aims to protect the community from wind-driven wildfires. Courtesy photo

Rancho Murieta, 33% is on ranch land west of Scott Road, and 27% is within the Deer Creek Hills Preserve.

The Rancho Murieta Regional Fire Safe Council initially put together

the CAL FIRE grant application but couldn't submit it due to its lack of nonprofit status. Sacramento County Supervisor Sue Frost helped the *Continued on page 4*

TheRiverValleyTimes.com

Summerfest Enjoyed by Many



A group of teenage girls, along with a little sister, can't resist dancing as DJ Louie Giovanni plays a high-energy set.

Continued from page 1 a wine and beer garden, and food trucks offering everything from street tacos to desserts.

Carrillo said the idea is to have something for everyone because Summerfest is truly a community event.

The three-day celebration began on Thursday with a wine and dinner gala featuring a disco theme that attracted between 400 and 450 sponsors and their guests.

"It was such a fun theme. More people dressed up than ever," Carrillo said.

For the third consecutive year, Raley's served as the presenting title sponsor for Summerfest 2024. During the gala, Carrillo introduced two Raley's representatives: Karen Burns, the team leader for the Bel Air Market in Rancho Murieta; and District Team Leader Michael O'Connors, who oversees 16 stores.

Burns was the first to speak.

"I just want to let you know we are truly honored to be an integral part of the Rancho community, serving as a central spot where neighbors, family and friends can come together,"



The giant Zipper and the Ferris wheel are crowd favorites, always drawing long lines.





Heather Nottingham helps her daughter Zoey pick out a prize at a carnival game.



The Jeep go-around is one of more than a half dozen rides for young children.



Shea Krehbill locomotes inside a giant bubble.



For Alexis Walters, left, attending Summerfest is bittersweet as it will be her last one after growing up in the community. She and her friend Avery Slater head off to college next year.

selflessly give their time without any compensation. Among them is Travis Glunt, who grew up in Rancho Murieta. He and his partner Quade Cole make the drive from Utah each year to give back to the community.

Summerfest also benefits from a strong partnership with the Rancho Murieta Association Maintenance Department. Until this year, former Maintenance Manager Rod Hart and his staff handled up to 10 issues a day during the event. His successor, Troy Schaffner, took over this year and even stayed in his camper for a week to oversee logistics. Carrillo noted that all the maintenance employees are invested in Summerfest. She was glad that Rod Hart, now the RMA general manager, could enjoy the event with his family for the first time. In previous years, his family attended under his wife's supervision, as he was always occupied with work.

that without RMA Maintenance, Summerfest wouldn't happen," Carrillo said.

The Brass Ring Amusement carnival rides continued to entertain for a third year. Teens lined up for The Zipper and the Star Tower, while younger children, accompanied by parents or grandparents, were drawn to the Dumbo ride and the swirltournament.

Live entertainment at the beer garden stage added to the festivities on both Friday and Saturday nights. Big Crush, a 12-member band featuring three dancers, rocked the stage on Friday with vocalists performing today's hits and classic tunes. DJ Louie Giovanni performed on Saturday, and his high-energy sets packed the grassy

she said.

When O'Connors took the microphone, he called for a round of applause for the store, to which the crowd responded enthusiastically.

"Rancho Murieta is such an amazing community; we are proud to support it with our Bel Air," he said. Turning to Burns, he added that she had also managed the Murieta Market before the Bel Air opened. "Just a huge thank you," he said. "You have done an amazing job."

The other sponsors included more than two dozen companies and families, with a few new names joining this year. Among Alyssa Gritzmacher soars high I the Diamond and Platinum sponsors were Rancho Murieta Homes and Land, Notaries to You, West Coast Equine Foundation, Murieta Inn and Spa, the Angel Wing Vineyard, CMCS (Randy and Erika Kremer), Zeta Broadband, Sacramento County Supervisor Sue Frost and Pac Machines.

"The sponsors are so generous and kind," Carrillo said. "We are so fortunate because without their help, we wouldn't be able to operate at the same level with a carnival and



Alyssa Gritzmacher soars high in the bungee jump.

n everything else that we o do."

Summerfest also relies on more than 100 volunteers. In a win-win arrangement, volunteers from local organizations are paid \$10 an hour, which goes toward their specific cause or charity. Carrillo praised the Pleasant Grove High School wrestling team, saying, "I can't say enough about the coach. The wrestling girls and boys are so polite and helpful, just a great group of kids.'

Many other volunteers

"I'm pretty sure

ing strawberries.

Summerfest also offered activities separate from the carnival to enhance the fun. These included bungee-jumping, mechanical bull riding, archery tag and giant bubbles. Although the Shadow Glen Riding Stable, which usually operates a petting zoo and pony rides, couldn't attend this year due to the extreme heat, they plan to return next year.

The Saturday Bingo game, sponsored by the RMA Recreation Committee, was packed as usual. The poker tournament attracted around 68 players, though some left early to join the cornhole

dance floor, Carrillo said.

The Summerfest Committee has organized the event since 1999. Summerfest is a 501(c) nonprofit with no paid directors, officers or staff. This year's committee members include Sherry Luman-Carrillo, Mike Martel, Jasmine Schmelz, Sid Williams, Lori Ogden, Kim Doughty, Jake Killian, Chloe Carrillo, Makayla Oei and Desiree Harper.

To date, Summerfest has raised approximately \$1 million, with proceeds going back into the community to support educational and recreational projects for youth and families.



Rancho Murieta, a 3,500-acre country-club community, is an oasis of emerald fairways and manicured greens, built along the scenic banks of the Cosumnes River. It encompasses five lakes, greenbelts, rolling hills and stately oaks. Karen is a Presidential Award Holder with the Masters Club of the Sacramento Association of Realtors for over 37 years. This is the most prestigious award given.

Thank you to all of our clients in 2023 for another successful year. BRE #00670687



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Third Time's the Charm for Kiwanis Fundraiser

By Gail Bullen River Valley Times Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - The third time was the charm when the Kiwanis Club held its farm to fork dinner on the event lawn of the Rancho Murieta Country Club on Sept. 28, raising funds for scholarships for disadvantaged high school seniors.

Unlike the two previous dinners, where an all-volunteer group did its best to serve a couple hundred diners at the remote Lake Clementia Amphitheater, this year's event went off seamlessly.

That was the sentiment from Kiwanian Carol Prinzo, who has been the main organizer for all three years.

"I sat there dumbfounded because everything went so well," Prinzo said. "I just can't stress how much the country club helped. They took such a burden off our shoulders."

Lise Smith, who attended all three dinners, agreed.

"The food was fabulous, the service was great, and I had a great group at my table," Smith said. "This year's dinner was a great improvement over last year."

Despite the successful execution, only 93 tickets were sold for this year's

dinner, falling short of the 200-ticket target. The various obstacles faced during last year's event were likely the reason for the lower turnout.

The reduced proceeds were disheartening for Prinzo. The cause that she and her fellow Kiwanians hold dear is the Turn-Around Scholarship Program. Administered by the Elk Grove Regional Scholarship Foundation, it provides scholarships to Elk Grove Unified School District high school students who have overcome adversity to achieve a GPA of at least 3.0 by graduation.

"These are kids who never in a million years would qualify for a traditional scholarship, but this gives them a hand up to go to college and to go to trade school," Prinzo said. "These kids have struggled, yet they have managed to graduate with at least a 3.0 GPA. That's what it is all about."

Realizing that the Lake Clementia Amphitheater was not an ideal location, Prinzo and her committee decided to move the dinner to the country club this year. Jeannette Edwards served as co-chair, with committee members Dia Utterback, Diann Swan, Cookie Whalen and Bronwyn Anthony. To their surprise,



KC Brown, the country club's executive chef, is greeted with loud applause during the dinner. Photo by Gail Bullen



One of the 10 centerpieces, each designed by the hostesses, graces a dinner table. Photo by Dia Utterback

booking the country club was less expensive than renting tables, chairs, linens and portable toilets, buying desserts from Costco and managing other unexpected expenses that had previously arisen.

The new venue also eliminated many logistical challenges, such as requiring table hostesses to provide plates, glassware and silverware, as well as to design a centerpiece. While the Knights of Columbus had run a limited bar at past dinners with only beer, wine and bottled water, attendees at this year's event could simply



Attendees seated at one of the 10 tables raise their glasses in celebration. Photo by Gail Bullen

Pleasant Grove High

School chapters of the

Kiwanis Key Club pro-

vided invaluable help

under the supervision of

Kiwanians Patti Maffei and

Suzie Pierce. Dressed like

professional wait staff in

white shirts, black pants

and black bow ties, the

teens attentively served

each course, cleared dishes

and handed out boxes for

leftovers. Another teen

KC Brown, the coun-

try club's executive chef,

crafted a four-course, gour-

met menu for the event, as

he had for the past two din-

ners. This year's appetizer

was especially sumptu-

ous, featuring braised pork

belly with blackberry and

red onion jam, roasted

mushroom arancini and

smoked bell pepper ragout.

photographed the event.



Fourteen key club members from Rancho Murieta and Pleasant Grove High School participate in the event as servers. Leading the way with plates of appetizers are Matthew Tozi and Bella Ntale. Photo by Gail Bullen

walk into the clubhouse to purchase a cocktail.

Prinzo praised two country club employees for their assistance: Laura Koontz, the special events coordinator, for her help in planning and executing the dinner; and Isidro Martinez, the banquet captain, who supervised the setup and teardown of the tables.

"They were so kind and helpful as they helped us problem-solve," Prinzo said. "They are a big reason this went as smoothly as it did."

Prinzo also acknowledged the Rancho Murieta Association Maintenance Department employees for setting up the tents as they had done in previous years.

Fourteen teens from the Rancho Murieta and

After being asked by the Kiwanians to stop by the tent after dessert, Brown received a loud round of applause upon his introduction.

Kiwanis President Bill Kenney kicked off the dinner with a brief program. He individually recognized the members of the Farm-To-Fork Dinner Committee and the table hostesses, who this year were only responsible for creating a beautiful centerpiece. He also introduced three Kiwanians from the regional level" Brian McClean, the lieutenant governor for Kiwanis Region 44, his wife Michelle, and Paula Kelly, the executive director of the Kiwanis House on the UC Davis hospital campus.

Kenney encouraged attendees to contribute to the tip jars for their servers, which they generously did. The two Key Clubs will use the money to fund their own community projects.

At the end of the dinner, Kenney expressed his gratitude to the attendees.

"Because of people like you, we're able to give four \$1,000 turnaround scholarships this year," he announced.





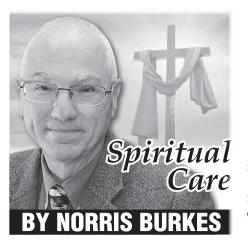
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Last Sunday, I admitted to my Nevada City congregation that I sometimes feel like the man who had had enough with life's difficulties, so he went to live in a monastery.

The abbot restricted the man's spoken words to only two words every year.

After his first year, he reported to the abbot to share his first two words: "Bed hard."

On his second annual opportunity, he pronounced, "Food bad."

Finally, on his third year, he came to the abbot's office to proclaim, "I quit."

"I'm not surprised," said the abbot. "You've done nothing but complain since the day you arrived."

Well, I don't want you to think I complain too much, but I once spent a few days fretting over lost keys, car repairs and my daughter's somewhat risky international travel to Honduras.

On those occasions, "Mrs. Chaplain," (that's what I call her when she's not around) asked, "Have you prayed about

Don't Talk About God Behind His Back

?"

"At this point," I said, "honestly, my prayers would sound more like complaining."

"What's wrong with that?" she asked.

I took a few minutes to think about her challenge when I remembered a guy who did a fair bit of complaining himself: Moses.

You remember Moses. He's the one who bugged, literally bugged, the Egyptian Pharoah to free the Jewish people from slavery. Once the people were liberated, Moses ran his egress route through the oppressive heat of the Sinai Desert.

The people quickly forgot their wonderful freedom and started whining about the lack of good Chinese takeout. (OK, maybe they weren't that picky, but they were a bit famished. Read the complete story in Numbers 11.)

So Moses, also resenting his situation, asked God, "Why are you treating me this way? What did I ever to do to deserve this? Where am I supposed to get meat for all these people?"

He continued. "If this is how you intend to treat me, do me a favor and kill me. I've had enough."

Just an observation here: I don't recommend daring God to kill you; it's not a prayer for the faint of heart.

Nevertheless, God threw down a challenge of his own and said to Moses, "Gather together 70 men from among the leaders of Israel, men whom you know to be respected and responsible ... (and) you won't have to carry the whole thing alone."

In the end, Moses wasn't struck dead for his audacious request. Quite the opposite. God answered the prayer – providing a little help from Moses' friends.

Now, I don't pretend to know how prayer works, but I think Moses' prayer was effective for two reasons.

First, the prayer was simple and direct. It wasn't a flowery prayer packed with

analogies, metaphors or obtuse tangents. God likes direct words. (He also dislikes dictionary words like "obtuse.")

Whenever I encounter someone complaining about their raw deal, I've always told them: Stop gossiping about God. Talk to God directly, not behind his back.

Go right up to God (wherever you talk to God) and say, "Hey, God! My life stinks!"

Then turn it into the prayers Anne Lamott describes in her book, "Traveling Mercies."

"Here are the two best prayers I know:

'Help me, help me, help me' and 'Thank you, thank you, thank you.'"

Moses' simple prayer worked because God heard the heart of the prayer: honesty.

In the midst of the griping, God heard a confession known by anyone in a 12-step recovery process.

It's a prayer that has various wordings, but the gist is, "I'm powerless to do anything by myself. I need help."

It was the same kind of prayer my wife was challenging me to pray.

A little later, she asked, "Find your keys yet?"

"No, but I think God's given me a plan to find them."

"Really?"

"Yeah. How do you feel about having 70 readers come over and help me look for my keys?"

"Really? After 23 years of column writing, do you still claim to have at least 70 readers?"

I think I'll start calling her "Mrs. Moses."

Just not to her face.

Email comments to comment@thechaplain.net or by text or voicemail to (843)608-9715. See past columns and other books at website www.thechaplain.net. \star

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Thanks for Successful Farm-to-Fork Fundraiser

Kiwanis Club of Rancho Murieta wants to thank you, our community, for supporting our Farm-to-Fork Dinner fundraiser for the Turn-Around-Scholarship Program.

Without your support, we would be unable to offer these very important scholarships to deserving graduating seniors in the Elk Grove Unified School District. The students selected for this very special scholarship program are those who have turned their academic life around to maintain, and graduate with, at least a 3.0 GPA.

We experienced several logistical challenges at last year's dinner. We made the decision to partner with the Rancho Murieta Country Club in order to overcome those challenges. And overcome them we DID! It was a wonderful event with fabulous food and service from our Key Club students! Everyone had a very enjoyable evening!

Kiwanis appreciates and is grateful for:

— The two Key Clubs, Rancho Murieta and Pleasant Grove High School. They were gracious and efficient and did a stellar job as our servers! That includes Brooke Blaisdell from the RM Key Club, who was their designated photographer for the event! Patti Maffei and Susie
 Pierce, Kiwanis members,
 who worked closely with
 the Key Club volunteers,
 Chef KC and the RMCC
 staff and guided them
 skillfully through their
 responsibilities as servers!
 The Table Hostesses,
 who did an outstanding
 job decorating the tables!
 It was another magical
 endeavor that helped make
 the evening so special!

— Chef KC for the absolutely wonderful meal! Everyone raved about the

food and said it was the best ever!

— The Farm-to-Fork Dinner committee, the Kiwanis volunteers and the RMA Maintenance team who all worked tirelessly to pull this event together! — And a LOT of credit goes to the Country Club staff, especially Laura Koontz and Isidro, who kept us on track and kept everything running smoothly!

— Thank you, Bill Kenney, our incoming Kiwanis

president, for emceeing the event. You did a great job! — And, to those of you who were unable to attend the event but wanted to contribute to this worthy cause, thank you for your generous donations! We really appreciate it!

As the saying goes: "It takes a village" and "The third time's a charm!"

Thank you, Rancho Murieta! ★ —Carol Prinzo, Farmto-Fork Dinner

to-Fork Dinner Committee chair

Changes Coming to SMF



Fire Fuel Reduction Starts Soon

Continued from page 1

Sept. 26, 2023. Thorley had initially

Airport

By Daniel Canfield

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA

- Effective Oct. 1 and without much ceremony, the Sacramento International Airport (SMF) hourly parking lot was closed, according to the airport website.

This was the closest parking lot to Terminal B, had more than 600 parking spaces available and was ideal for short visits to the airport to meet or drop off travelers using Terminal B.

Terminal B accommodates the following airlines: Aeromexico, Alaska Airlines, Frontier, Hawaiian Airlines, Horizon, JetBlue, Southwest, Spirit and Volaris.

The Sacramento International Airport's website indicates the hourly lot will be permanently closed to make way for a new parking garage that will boast more than 5,500 spaces when completed.

This new development is part of a larger capital improvement project ongoing at the airport. The project, dubbed SMF Foreword by Sacramento County leaders, is expected to cost \$1.3 billion when completed.

According to a September airport news release, project funding is coming from the sale of General Airport Revenue Bonds.

"Increasing close-in garage parking capacity is

Here is an architectural rendering of the future Terminal B parking garage as seen from street level. Photos courtesy of Sacramento County Department of Airports

the number one opportunity we have to improve the guest experience at SMF," said Cindy Nichol, director of airports for the Sacramento County Department of Airports, in an April 2024 news release.

Indeed, a day after the hourly lot was closed, airport officials were joined by local dignitaries to break ground on the new Terminal B parking garage.

"Today's groundbreaking is another important step to realize the SMF Forward vision and deliver tangible improvements for our community," said Rep. Doris Matsui, D-Sacramento, at the groundbreaking event. "This new parking garage will greatly expand capacity while going above and beyond to make the facility convenient and technologically cutting edge. I'm proud to champion the work of our airport and we are only continuing to push the envelope to keep it the national gold standard for years to come."

According to a Sacramento County news release on the groundbreaking, the parking garage project will generate 1,000 jobs during its construction phase and will utilize labor under a Community Workforce Training Agreement, creating opportunities for the local workforce.

Sacramento International Airport visitors have recently become accustomed to the airport's existing parking lots and parking garages near the terminals being full during busy travel periods, leaving travelers few options except to utilize the remote long-term parking lots and ride the shuttle to the terminals.

The new parking garage, when completed, will be a great asset to Sacramento travelers.

In the meantime, the hourly-lot closure will put additional pressure on the other airport parking lots during the new garage's construction.

Sacramento International Airport's Senior Public Information Officer Scott Johnston provided this guidance: "Travelers are encouraged to check parking availability and track shuttles in real-time before arriving at the airport. We also recommend arriving two-and-a-half hours before a flight and using rideshare options instead of driving."

For more information on parking at Sacramento International Airport, visit www.sacramento.aero/smf/ to-and-from/parking. ★ council secure an agreement with Sacramento County Regional Parks to sponsor and administer the grant. CAL FIRE awarded the grant to county parks in July 2022, and county parks employee Veronica Thorley has been administering it since then.

Speaking at a Rancho Murieta community meeting last year, Thorley stated that the goal is to reduce ladder fuels on local lands so that regular maintenance can protect the community and promote healthy oak woodlands. She estimated that the project will protect over 5,000 people and structures valued at \$1.2 billion.

Thorley explained that planning activities for the project began in January 2023. To comply with the California Environmental Quality Act, the project was analyzed under the California Vegetation Treatment Program, an extensive Environmental Impact Report developed by CAL FIRE to streamline environmental compliance and address California's wildfire crisis.

Sacramento County Parks also contracted with Ascent Environmental to provide a specific analysis and addendum for the local project. Thorley noted that the consulting firm worked closely with Sacramento County, the contracted registered foresters, and the Sacramento Valley Conservancy to ensure that environmental impacts were minimized or avoided.

The Sacramento County Board of Supervisors approved the project on hoped to begin groundwork in January of this year, but the project faced delays when county parks had to reject the initial contracting bids because they came in too high. After receiving legal advice that allowed for the removal of a prevailing wage requirement, county parks issued

a revised request for bids. Banducci stated that county parks hired three contractors through this process, and she expects their contracts to be final-

ized by mid-October. Banducci, who is retired from CAL FIRE, is affiliated with TUV SUD Forestry Services, the forestry consulting firm working with county parks on this project. She provided an overview of the fuel reduction prescriptions she developed:

"When we say ladder fuel removal, the intent is to raise the canopies of the trees and to separate them from the ground fuels: grasses and brush," she explained. "The intent is when the fire starts and gets going, you want to keep it on the ground."

According to Banducci, these fuel treatments make fires easier to extinguish and reduce the risk of embers, which in a winddriven fire can start new fires miles away.

"The biggest risk to the community is the fires that start outside and move inside," she said.

While the grant does not include funding for understory burning, the environmental document was written to allow for potential training burns conducted by CAL FIRE,



Rancho Murieta resident Phyllis Banducci, a registered forester, is overseeing the project. She also developed the fuel treatment prescriptions for the units shown on the map. Courtesy photo

especially with firefighters soon to be stationed at the Boys Ranch.

Contractors will remove trees smaller than six inches in diameter and prune larger trees up to six feet.

"The most important treatment will be taking care of a lot of trees that went down in the 2023 storm," Banducci noted.

Referring to the accompanying map, Banducci said she has created a detailed prescription page for each unit, specifying the number of acres, the required fuel treatment and the necessary equipment, ranging from chainsaws to masticator tractors. The trails and boundaries for each unit are also clearly marked.

She emphasized that special treatment zones will involve 100% fuel reduction along all property lines and public roads, including Scott and Latrobe Roads and a short section of the parkway.

In addition to fuel reduction, the grant is funding herbicide treatment in the Deer Creek Hills Preserve. Five types of invasive weeds that are harmful to livestock have been targeted. The Sacramento Valley Conservancy is also planting 500 trees to help regenerate Blue Oaks in the preserve.



The wait is finally over and once again a frenetic group of nearly 20,000 fans will hear the introduction, "and now running the point for the Sacramento Kings from the Kentucky Wildcats. De'Aaron Fox!"

On Wednesday night for the very first time Sacramento fans will hear the introduction of newcomer DeMar DeRozan out of the University of Southern California. DeRozan, like many of his comrade's, chose to bolt to the NBA after just one year in college, and the ninth overall pick in the 2009 draft has been an overwhelming success ever since.

Drafted by the Toronto Raptors, DeRozan spent nine years in Canada before a short stint in San Antonio, and then on to Chicago. Traded for Kawhi Leonard, DeRozan had to watch from San Antonio as the Raptors captured the NBA title in 2019.

Many pundits were wildly surprised that of all the destinations and the high interest in his service, DeRozan chose Sacramento as his next home. Since then, he has said all the right things, and like many NBA fans, I believe he will fit in extremely well alongside De'Aaron Fox and Domantas Sabonis. Great players are replete, but great people and

great players are a scarce commodity. Mr. DeRozan brings both qualities to a team that is replete with team chemistry, and like most Kings fans, I want to see what Monte McNair's standout acquisition can do.

It is entirely possible that amid all the hype, Kings fans may have to be patient while the big three learn to play alongside one another, but I firmly believe that this six-time all-star will make the transition quickly.

Able to play guard or small forward, much has been reported about the uptick we are likely to see with regards to better looks for Fox, Sabonis, and three-point shooter Keegan Murray.

Lost to some degree in all the uproar of the signing of DeRozan, is how third year hoopster Murray will use DeRozan's talents to get better looks, and more opportunities to drive the lane.

I was impressed with Keegan's introduction of a true mid-range game last season, and along with some notable shooting inside the three-point line, like former teammate Harrison Barnes, Murray became a threat driving to the basket.

SACRAMENTO

The combination of Murray's threepoint shooting, mid-range game, and ability to go to the hole, will have a positive impact on DeRozan as well, and I expect to see this career 21 points per game player, potentially pad that number in the upcoming season.

Not to be overshadowed, Domantas Sabonis could elevate his game even more with the myriad of scoring ability around him, and a return to the high octane offense that led the NBA two years ago may well be in the offing.

It remains to be seen what the loss of defensive minded Jordi Fernandez will do to the Kings, and without question assistant head coach Jay Triano will have big shoes to fill.

Fitting that Sacramento's first opponent of the preseason will be archrival, The Golden State Warriors, and like the Kings, the Warriors will bring a vaunted offensive into Golden One.

Notably missing Wednesday night will be perennial three-point shooter and other half of the splash brothers, Klay Thompson, who has now donned royal blue colors of the Dallas Mavericks.

Joining all-stars Luka Doncic and Kyrie Irving, Thompson hopes to reignite a career that took a two-and-a-half-year hiatus after suffering back-to-back injuries to his ACL and Achilles.

It's important to note that Thompson helped the Warriors to an NBA title in his comeback season of 2022, but the past two years have seen Klay a step slower, and his offense not as reliable as it once was. At age 34 the 6'6" Thompson may still have more in the tank, but we won't witness that until the Mavericks come to town on Dec. 30.

Hitch up your britches Kings fans. We are in for a different look than perhaps this team has ever presented, and it's going to be a fun ride.

May the Beam shine brighter than ever!

Your thoughts are always welcome at vgharriskingsfan@gmail.com.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Petition for Development Moratorium Gains More Signatures

Save Our Lakes & Open Spaces (SOLOS) reported that it had collected 1,911 petition signatures as of Oct. 3.

The petition being circulated by the all-volunteer group demands that the Rancho Murieta Community Services District declare a moratorium on development because the community faces a water supply challenge.

The petition can be found online at solosrm. org/moratorium.

The petitions will be officially presented to the district directors at a future board meeting.

Murieta Sidewalk Shoppe Returns Oct. 19

Join us on Saturday, Oct. 19 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. for the Murieta Sidewalk Shoppe, a community event showcasing local artisans and vendors.

Don't miss the pumpkin-carving contest, pet costume parade and fall mini sessions.

Bring the family and celebrate the fall season with us.

More information is at @murieta.sidewalk.shoppe and murietasidewalkshoppe@gmail.com.

Beekeeper to Speak to Garden Club| on Oct. 22

The importance of bees will be the focus of the River Valley Garden Club's next meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 22.

Doors open at 6:30 p.m., with the business meeting and presentation starting at 7 p.m.

The guest speaker will

be Tina Macuha, who recently appeared on "Good Day Sacramento."

After retiring in February, she now catches bees and gives educational presentations.

The first garden club meeting is free to attend. Annual membership is \$25 for individuals and \$35 for families.

For more information, visit the club's website at www.rivervalleygardenclub.net.

RMA Slates Trunk or Treat Halloween Event Oct. 26

The Rancho Murieta Association is hosting an alternative to traditional trick-or-treating called "Trunk or Treat" at Stonehouse Park on Saturday, Oct. 26, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Members of the Corvette and Classic Car clubs will be offering candy from their trunks as children walk from car to car.

New this year, decorated golf carts are also welcome to join in the fun.

The RMA will be grilling hot dogs and handing out candy bags to the kids.

RMA Board member Renee Bechtold encourages families to attend this free event.

"Put the kids in costume and come out and have some fun," they said.

RM Blood Drive Slated Oct. 28

The Rancho Murieta Women's Club has slated its next blood drive on Monday, Oct. 28, 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 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 gift card from the Backyard restaurant that was donated by Carole Thames of Town & Country Real Estate. All donors will receive a 10% off coupon 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.

Village Craft Fair and Bake Sale Nov. 2

Rancho Murieta residents can get a head start on Christmas shopping for unique gifts and homemade treats at the Murieta Village Craft Fair and Bake Sale on Nov. 2, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the clubhouse.

Offerings will include fine art, walnuts, wreaths, crafts, photography, plants, candy, jewelry, soap and much more.

The kitchen will also be open, serving hot dogs and coffee.

Wilton Bingo Games Held Monthly

Wilton Bingo is the first Saturday of each month in the Wilton Community Center located at the corner of Colony Road and Dillard Road. Doors open at 5 p.m. and Bingo starts at 6 p.m. The cost is \$10 for 10 games.

All proceeds go to two nonprofit organizations: the local Parks Council and the Wilton History Group.

For more information, call Lorraine at 916-212-8896. ★



Continued from page 1

on July 1, Dutton had informed the membership that RMP met with the board on June 27 to "inform the BOD on the status of a sale agreement, so the club could move forward with our bankruptcy application."

When asked about the current status of the bankruptcy, Dutton said that the club couldn't file under the current circumstances and explained the requirements for doing so.

"So the conditions are that we are in a place where we can't afford to keep running the business and there is a buyer in place who wants to buy the business," he explained. "In this case, we could file for bankruptcy, default on the lease, and somebody else could come in and buy the place from RMP to keep it going."

Dutton also mentioned in the July 1 update that RMP had contracted with Troon, a large golf management company, to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the club's facilities, grounds and operations in preparation for the transition to RMP.

When asked if that assessment had been completed, Dutton reported that Troon representatives had reviewed the financials, operations and facilities. However, he does not believe the report has been finalized. Although the club requested a courtesy copy, it may not be entitled to one since they did not pay for the assessment.

The board might not see the assessment until the club is sold, which Dutton



Rancho Murieta Club's bankruptcy plans are on hold because the club doesn't have a current buyer. Photo by Gail Bullen

said was acceptable.

"It's all about the end game, finding the buyer and keeping the club up and running forever," he said.

Dutton first informed the membership that the board was considering bankruptcy as a potential solution to the club's severe financial situation in a Dec. 1 email. Following this, the board held a town hall meeting on Dec. 12 to present three options for keeping the club operational and to explain why filing for bankruptcy was seen as the most viable choice. The tense meeting attracted about 300 attendees.

An electronic vote on the options was conducted between Dec. 18 and 22, where the membership overwhelmingly authorized the board to initiate bankruptcy proceedings.

Dutton reported that the club's financial condition has improved since December. Although the 2024 fiscal budget projected a \$56,000 deficit by August, "Our actual year to date was \$193,700 to the good," Dutton said. "Those are real world numbers."

He credited the staff for this achievement.

"I wouldn't be down there on a part-time basis (as the interim general manager) if the staff and department heads weren't as good as they are," he said.

In his October email, Dutton also mentioned that he intended to inform the general managers of the Rancho Murieta Association and the Rancho Murieta Community Services District about the club's situation and upcoming discussions. When asked if he sought financial assistance from the other two entities, Dutton replied that he had not.

He explained that his goal was to keep them updated since meetings involving the general managers and board presidents of the three entities had not occurred for some time. He also pointed out that the district has a small financial interest in the club due to an outstanding loan balance, which the club is regularly paying off.

Dutton concluded his October email by emphasizing the interconnectedness of the club, RMA and the district.

"As a result of the past 10 months of effort, it is obvious that RMP is a fourth, and very important, component in the equation," he wrote. \bigstar

Kindergartners are giddy with their blankets and Beanie Babies from Sacramento Blankets for Sacramento Kids. Photo courtesy of Claire Gliddon

Sacramento Blankets for Sacramento Kids Readies for Annual Holiday Giveaway

By Claire Gliddon, Sacramento Blankets for Sacramento Kids

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Got Beanie Babies?

Sacramento Blankets for Sacramento Kids (SBSK) is asking for donations of new or "almost new" Beanie Babies all year long. Every September, Sacramento Blankets for Sacramento Kids picks as many of the lowest-income elementary schools they can and finds out how many kindergartners they have.

Volunteers make double fleece blankets (about 40" x 60") and a little fleece pouch with a Beanie Baby in it to go with each blanket for its Kindergarten Project. Sacramento Blankets for Sacramento Kids gives blankets and fleece pouches to the children right before Christmas break. Some of the kindergartners live in cars or in places without heat and this is all they get for Christmas.

The gifts are very popular with the teachers and the children.

This is Sacramento Blankets for Sacramento Kids' 11th year for the Kindergarten Project and the volunteers hope to continue doing it for as long as they can get Beanie Babies. In 2023, Sacramento Blankets for Sacramento Kids gave out more than 2,394 blankets and Beanie Babies for its Kindergarten Project!

Sacramento Blankets for Sacramento Kids is always looking for more volunteers to make blankets year round for children in need. Like to knit, crochet, sew, quilt, make no-sew blankets and have run out of people to make gifts for? We're looking for you.

If you would like more information about Sacramento Blankets for Sacramento Kids, go to www.sacblankets4kids.

com and sign in. There is no pressure, no timelines, no meetings, just others who enjoy crocheting, knitting, quilting, sewing, making no-sew blankets and helping many children at the same time.

Sacramento Blankets for Sacramento Kids is a nonprofit organization that serves children in need from infants to 18-yearolds. While the volunteers help all year long, the Kindergarten Project is their "special" project of the year.

Murieta Pet Hospital Finally Set to Open

Story and photo by Gail Bullen **River Valley Times** Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - Following three years of delays, the long-anticipated Murieta Pet Hospital is expected to open on Monday, Oct. 14. It is located on Oakville Lane south of Jackson Highway.

Dr. Tyler Baum, one of three partners, has already begun booking appointments for what he is describing as a soft opening.

"Barring any crazy, unforeseen complications, our contractor has given us pretty good assurances that we would be open and operational on the 14th," he said.

Baum said it was exciting to finally open the 4,500-square-foot hospital.

"It's been a stressful time for all of us, including the community, with everyone wanting us to open and us wanting the same thing,"

he said. "We are looking forward to making what is been a consistent dream for the past three years into an actual reality."

A grand opening for the pet hospital has been slated for Saturday, Nov. 16.

Baum said they will initially staff the hospital with one full-time and two parttime veterinarians and with 10 to 11 support staffers mostly hired from the surrounding area.

Although the hospital will only operate on weekdays at the outset, the partners hope to grow the practice as quickly as possible with expanded hours, emergency care, overnight hospitalizations and even large animal services.

Ideally, three to four veterinarians will eventually staff the Rancho Murieta clinic.

"Just as long as the community support is there, we will be able to expand our services," Baum said

The hospital has two fully functional operating

rooms for procedures all the way from soft tissue to orthopedics to spaying services and dental cleanings. An in-house lab will supply clients with answers within minutes. The practice also partners with a Sacramento lab that provides quick turnaround times for tests that can't be handled in-house. The hospital equipment will include full digital X-ray machines and ultrasound.

The hospital's starting point will be treating companion animals, dogs, cats, birds, and exotics like rabbits, reptiles and Guinea pigs. The hospital's first full-time veterinarian will be Dr. Pietro Catini, who actually began his career in the cattle industry in Visalia. He currently works with small animals at Broadway Veterinary Hospital in Sacramento.

"He is very excited about the possibility of running a mobile, large-animal service once we get off the ground and our



The Murieta Pet Hospital is already accepting appointments for its opening day on Monday, Oct. 14. The new business is located at Oakville Lane and Murieta Drive.

initial clinic running," Baum said. "We may also have the ability to do some large animals on site, but that is down the line."

Baum said that he and Dr. Audrey Atchley will initially fill in as part-time veterinarians in Rancho Murieta. The partnership also operates Broadway Veterinary Hospital in Sacramento and the Venetian Pet Hospital in Stockton.

"One of the things we strive to do at our other clinics is not to let anyone be a number on a page but to have personalized and very individualized care for all of our animals." Baum said.

Initially expecting to open a year ago, Baum said the project delays had been very frustrating and out of their control.

They began after the partnership filed a design review application with Sacramento County in November 2021. "It took almost a year to get our permits because of COVID," he said.

However, the biggest issue was securing a switch gear, which is the piece that connects the building to the power grid.

"According to our contractor, there are only two places that make them in the world, and because of COVID and production issues we got a massive backorder," he said. "A piece that was supposed to take two to three months to get here ended up taking a year and a half."

Even after the switch arrived in May, the building couldn't be connected to the grid until late September because of repeated delays by SMUD, which also is experiencing backlogs.

"Now we are in a mad dash to get all our final permitting done so we can open in mid-October and start servicing the Rancho Murieta Community," Baum told the River Valley Times in an Oct. 1 interview.

IRS Encourages End-Of-Summer Tax Checkup to Avoid Surprises Next Year

IRS News Release

WASHINGTON (MPG) - The Internal Revenue Service has encouraged taxpayers to consider using the end of summer to make tax withholding or payment updates to avoid a potential surprise next year at tax time.

While most taxpayers get a refund after filing their taxes, many also find they unexpectedly owe taxes.

This can be due to a life or job change for which they did not make the necessary tax adjustment during the year.

Those who should be especially careful are Gig economy workers, those



copy of their 2023 tax year return.

People can use the Tax Withholding Estimator to estimate their federal income tax withholding, see how a refund, takehome pay or tax due are affected by withholding amounts and choose an estimated withholding amount that works for them and their family.

If a withholding change is needed upon completion, taxpayers should adjust their withholding by submitting a new Form W-4 to their employer or pension provider. They can also adjust quarterly estimated tax payments as appropriate.

IRS also reminds people o use the Tax Withholding Estimator if there's a major life change such as a new job or other paid work, major income change, a marriage, childbirth or adoption and a new home purchase. While the Тах Withholding Estimator works for most taxpayers, people with more complex tax situations should instead use the instructions in Publication 505, Tax Withholding and Estimated Tax. This includes taxpayers who owe Alternative Minimum Tax or certain other taxes, and people with long-term capital gains or qualified dividends.

with a "side hustle" and anyone earning income not subject to withholding.

These individuals should check the amount they pay, or the amount of tax they have withheld throughout the year, to bring the tax they pay closer to what is owed.

The IRS has a special Tax Withholding Estimator that can help taxpavers align their tax withholding or tax payments with what they owe.

The IRS reminds taxpayers that tax planning done now can save time and frustration later. Here are some important things to keep in mind:

How refunds work The federal tax system is pay-as-you-go. Taxpayers pay tax as they earn wages or receive income during the year. For many, taxes are withheld from their paycheck by their employer and then given over to the IRS on their behalf. Others, such as gig economy workers, make or should make quarterly estimated tax payments throughout the year to stay current. A refund normally results when too much is

withheld or paid throughout the year. Recent IRS statistics show that two-thirds of taxpayers received a refund so far in 2024. As of mid-May, nearly \$270 billion in refunds went to taxpayers with the average refund just under \$2,900.

Avoid an unexpected Bill

On the other hand, many taxpayers end up with estimated tax penalties because they underpay throughout the year. The penalty amount varies but for some it can be several hundred dollars. Adjusting withholding on paychecks or the amount of estimated tax payments can help prevent penalties. This is especially important for self-employed people, including those in the gig economy, those with more than one job and those with major changes in their life, like a recent marriage or a new child.

With that in mind, the

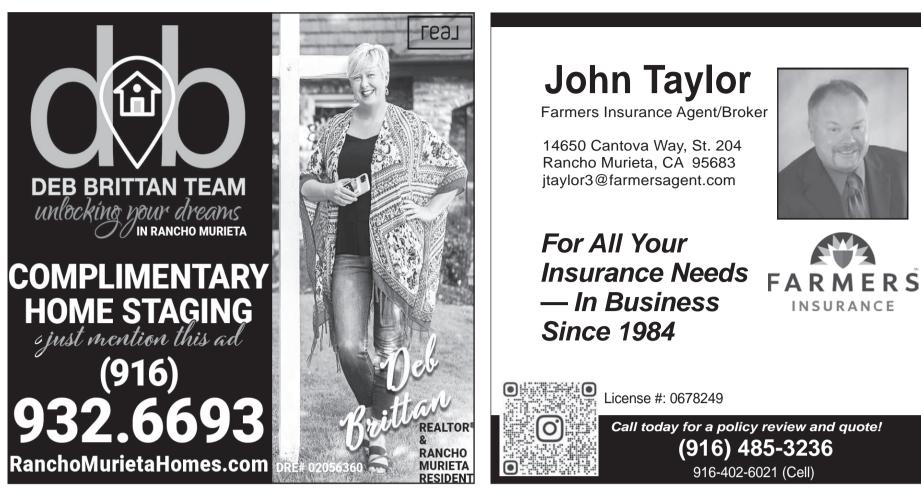
IRS encourages using the IRS Tax Withholding Estimator tax payments with what they owe.

Tax Withholding Estimator

This handy tool on IRS. gov helps people figure the amount of federal tax they should pay during the year. All that's needed to use it are pay stubs for all their jobs or other income information, such as from side jobs, self-employment or investment income and a









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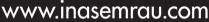






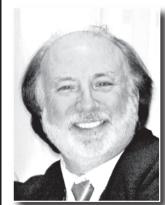
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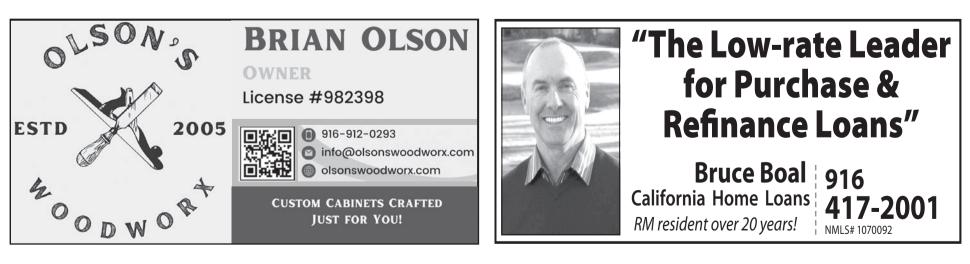




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New Resources Help Promote Teacher Prep Programs

California Commission on Teacher Credentialing News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) -The State Collaborative for California's Educator Workforce has released a new suite of tools to make high quality teacher preparation programs more accessible and affordable to prospective teachers across the state.

California faces persistent teacher shortages that force many districts to hire substitutes or teachers who have not completed a preparation program. These shortages are greatest for early childhood educators as well as those who specialize in teaching students with disabilities and who are multi-language learners.

Despite the state's unprecedented investments to strengthen the teacher pipeline, high quality preparation programs are often inaccessible or unaffordable for many prospective teachers.

To address this challenge, education leaders from state agencies, public, and private teacher preparation programs developed a suite of resources to help prospective teachers identify preparation pathways that best meet their needs given their individual experience and education, as well as guidance on available financial resources to make preparation affordable. "All students need and deserve well-pre-

pared, credentialed teachers. This resource toolkit will help California attract, grow, and retain the number of talented teachers needed to educate the next generation," said Mary Vixie Sandy, Collaborative lead and executive director of the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing along with Commission Chair Marquita Grenot-Scheyer.

The toolkit, available on the Commission on Teacher Credentialing's Roadmap to Teaching website, features:

Funding Your Future in Teaching, which offers financial planning steps for every aspiring educator along with sample funding packages for those considering a California-based teacher residency program; and a Teacher Candidate Funding Explorer database of resources to help prospective teachers offset the cost of earning a teaching credential.

In addition, the site includes a set of similar resources for teacher preparation program leaders that provide guidance on funding programs that pay teacher candidates a living wage while they earn their credential. The resources include:

A Teacher Preparation Program Funding Explorer, a searchable database of federal

and state funding sources that can be used to improve teacher preparation programs; and

A series of Teacher Residency Program Funding Scenarios that describe strategies for combining funding to develop and sustain a teacher residency program.

"Teacher preparation programs are available and can be affordable, but too many prospective teachers are unaware of the pathways available into teacher education.

"We have come together to increase awareness of those pathways and to give teacher candidates the information they need to select the pathway that's best for them," said commissioners and higher education representatives, Annamarie Francois, University of California, Shireen Pavri, California State University, and Kimberly White-Smith, Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities.

A new state law allows for individuals who hold a qualifying bachelor's degree or higher in any subject to be considered for admission to most teacher preparation programs.

"Teacher shortages are a nationwide issue that must be addressed by tackling barriers to equitable access and the affordability of teacher preparation programs," said Daisy Gonzales, executive director of the California Student Aid Commission. "These new tools will not only help prospective teachers identify high-quality teacher preparation programs, but also allow them and higher education institutions to participate in designing regional educational pathways to meet California's urgent need for teachers."

The resources were created through the State Educator Workforce Collaborative a collaboration between state agencies and teacher preparation programs including the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, California State Board of Education, California Department of Education, California Student Aid Commission, California State University Chancellor's Office, University of California Office of the President, California Community College Chancellor's Office, Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities, and Department of Finance and Office of the Governor - with research and support from WestEd.

For more information on the program visit the Commission on Teacher Credentialing at www.ctc.ca.gov/ credentials/roadmap-to-teaching/financial-resources-for-teacher-candidates. ★

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Transportation Impacts Dialysis Patient Outcomes

UC Davis News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (**MPG**) - An estimated 35.5 million Americans have kidney disease and more than 554,000 of them are on dialysis, according to the National Kidney Foundation.

Dialysis is a treatment to replace the filtering function of the kidneys. It removes waste and extra fluid from a person's blood, and then returns the filtered blood into their body.

Most patients go to a dialysis center three times a week, where each treatment takes three to four hours to complete. Skipping dialysis can be harmful — causing fluid overload, high potassium and elevated phosphorus levels — and can lead to severe health problems.

Dialysis requires consistency and a significant time commitment. But what happens when patients don't have reliable transportation? How consistently can they receive dialysis treatment?

That is a question UC Davis Health researchers are asking. Through a collaborative effort between Family and Community Medicine and Nephrology, a team of researchers are conducting a study to better understand the impact transportation and different modes of transportation have on dialysis patient outcomes.

"As a nephrologist, I see patients missing their dialysis appointments on a daily basis due to the variable quality of their transportation," explained Baback Roshanravan, associate professor of nephrology at UC Davis Health. "However, we have little research about who qualifies as transportation insecure and how we can best help them."

Transportation Data Collection

For the study, researchers will be working with a prospective cohort of 300 patients. Through U.S. Renal Care, they will collect transportation screening data from dialysis centers across the country and then look at each patient's outcomes following one-year of treatment.

The researchers will

also analyze a quantitative data set looking at the associations of patient outcomes and particular modes of transport, including services provided by Medicaid, paratransit, public transportation or private pay transportation.

"Our hope is this data will help guide us on how to screen for patients who are transportation insecure and help us develop the best strategies to better support them," said Na'amah Razon, assistant professor of family and community medicine at UC Davis Health and principal investigator of the study.

> Measuring Transportation Insecurity

Researchers will also

evaluate different tools to measure the extent transportation impacts dialysis patient outcomes.

One of the tools is the Transportation Security Index developed at the University of Michigan.

It is the first validated measure of transportation security that offers insights into who experiences transportation insecurity and enables researchers and practitioners to determine which interventions can improve this condition.

"The transportation security index is modeled after the food security index," explained Razon. "The survey is composed of items that focus on the material and relational aspects of transportation insecurity." Razon added, "We don't really have a common language with a shared definition to talk about or measure transportation insecurity. This index could help us identify the symptoms of transportation insecurity and think about specific interventions that could move the needle."

The study is being funded by the Mentored Patient-Oriented Research Career Development Award (K23) from the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK).

Collaborators include researchers from the University of Michigan, Stanford University, University of California San Francisco and Vanderbilt University. ★

Sacramento State Plans for Athletic Future

Sacramento State University News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Sacramento State announced results of a feasibility study evaluating the potential for its intercollegiate athletics program to take the next step in its growth and development. This significant step is part of the ongoing effort to ensure the continued success of Sacramento State athletics and to align with nationally successful collegiate programs.

The study, which was conducted by College Sports Solutions and



commissioned in July 2023, outlines key areas of focus, including facility upgrades, financial investments, and program development. Among the primary recommendations are enhancements to the University's football and basketball facilities and increased resources to support student-athletes. The findings will serve as a roadmap for Sacramento State's long-term success as the institution evaluates the best path forward.

With its recent achievements, including three consecutive Big Sky football championships, and an offering of 21 sports, Sacramento State is well positioned for continued growth. The feasibility study shows that the University's commitment to athletics will ensure that its programs remain competitive, both regionally and nationally.

"We are energized about what this study shows regarding the future of our athletics program and its implications for the University as a whole," said Sacramento State President Luke Wood. "Our recent accomplishments across multiple sports, coupled with the investments we are ready to make across campus, demonstrate that Sacramento State is prepared to rise to the next level. The numbers show we are on the right track, and we are enthusiastic about the possibilities ahead."

The executive summary of the study highlights important considerations, including the need to increase scholarships for student-athletes to meet the benchmarks of top-tier programs. Additionally, it emphasizes a focus on enhancing football and basketball venues, including expanded seating. enhanced media and team areas, and increased revenue opportunities through premium seating and sponsorship. The report also outlines the importance of supporting student-athletes through Sacramento State's strategic development of its Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) initiatives.

"Our athletics program has thrived in recent years, and this study shows that we are well-positioned to continue building on that momentum," said Mark Orr, Sacramento State's director of Athletics. "By investing in our facilities, scholarships, and student-athlete support, we can ensure that Sacramento State remains on a strong path."

With a student population of over 31,000 and a history of athletic success, Sacramento State continues to prioritize the development of its sports programs, preparing them to compete at the highest levels.

For more information on the feasibility study visit the Sacramento State University website at www.csus.edu.

Stay Current on Your Vaccines This Fall

California Department of Public Health News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Limiting the spread of respiratory viruses helps everyone, especially vulnerable members of our community such as children, older adults and those who are immunocompromised. recommended for eligible pregnant people, older adults, infants and toddlers. As always, talk to your healthcare provider about which vaccines are right for you and your family.

local pharmacy or health care provider.

Cost

Flu, COVID-19, and RSV vaccines will be covered for most people through their health insurance plans, including Medi-Cal and regular health care providers. Those having difficulty obtaining vaccines can contact their health care provider or local health department for help finding a place to get immunized. Vaccines For Children (VFC) program is a federally funded program that provides vaccines at no cost to children (18 and younger) who might not otherwise be vaccinated because of an inability to pay. Contact your doctor to learn if they are enrolled in Vaccines For Children or visit MyTurn to find a location based on your eligibility.

provider, and ask about prescription medications, which work best when started right after symptoms begin. Learn more about treatments for both COVID-19 and flu.

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) is encouraging all Californians to get vaccinated this season to protect themselves and their loved ones from respiratory viruses. Respiratory infections, such as flu, COVID-19 and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), are common during the fall and winter seasons, and getting immunized against these diseases has been proven safe and effective in preventing serious illness and death in children and adults.

"It's time to start preparing for the fall and winter virus season, and that means getting immunized against flu, COVID-19 and RSV," said Dr. Tomás J. Aragón, California Department of Public Health Director and State Public Health Officer. "Taking this step means fewer sick days and more time with your loved ones. We are stronger when we are all protected against respiratory diseases."

Recommended Vaccines

vaccines are recommended for everyone 6

months and older. RSV immunizations are

Updated 2024-2025 flu and COVID-19

Flu: Everyone 6 months and older should get vaccinated against the flu annually, ideally before the end of October.

COVID-19: The updated 2024-2025 COVID-19 vaccine will be increasingly available throughout California beginning in September for everyone 6 months and older.

The updated vaccine is expected to protect against circulating variants throughout the winter.

RSV: RSV most often spreads between October through March. The following groups should get immunized: Adults aged 75 and older; and adults aged 60-74 at increased risk; Pregnant people who are 32 to 36 weeks pregnant from September through January; Babies younger than 8 months and children 8 to 19 months old who are at high risk for severe RSV.

The RSV vaccine is not currently an annual vaccine, so adults who have already received a dose do not need another dose.

Scheduling

Flu, COVID-19 and RSV vaccines can all be administered during the same visit. Schedule a vaccine appointment by visiting MyTurn.ca.gov or contacting your

Additional Layers of Virus Prevention

In addition to vaccines, people can follow simple actions to prevent viruses from spreading.

Stay home when sick: Staying home when you're sick prevents the spread of flu, COVID-19, RSV and even the common cold.

Test and treat: Test for COVID-19 and flu if you have symptoms (like fever, chills, runny nose, cough, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, stomach issues). If you test positive, contact your health care Wear a high-quality mask in indoor public places: Wearing a high-quality mask (N95, KN95) significantly reduces the spread of respiratory viruses, especially in crowded or poorly ventilated spaces.

Wash hands: Wash hands throughout the day with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

Cover coughs and sneezes: Remember to cough or sneeze into your elbow, your arm, or a disposable tissue to help prevent the spread of viruses. Wash or sanitize your hands and dispose of your tissue after.

Ventilate indoor spaces: Good ventilation helps reduce the spread of viruses. If it is safe to do so, open doors and windows as much as possible to bring in fresh outdoor air. This can help keep virus particles from building up indoors.

Get more information about respiratory virus prevention by visiting the California Department of Public Health Respiratory Viruses webpage at https:// www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/ Pages/Respiratory-Viruses/Home. aspx#msdynttrid=bQWVA9MeYIr5hUg-ZBmjZ3UxpW75MmJi36BpSkGZcIs4. ★

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'American Pickers' to Film in California

Cineflix Productions News Release

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA (MPG) - The American Pickers are excited to return to California! They plan to film episodes of The History Channel hit television series throughout your area in November 2024.

"American Pickers" is a documentary series that explores the fascinating world of antique "picking" on The History Channel. The hit show follows skilled pickers in the business as they hunt for America's most valuable antiques. They are always excited to find historically significant or rare items in addition to unforgettable characters and their collections.

As they hit the back roads from coast to coast, the Pickers are on a

mission to recycle and rescue forgotten relics. Along the way, they want to meet characters with amazing stories and fun items. They hope to give historically significant objects a new lease on life while learning a thing or two about America's past along the way. The Pickers have seen a lot of rusty gold over the years and are always looking to discover something they've never seen before. They are ready to find extraordinary items and hear fascinating tales about them.

The American Pickers TV show is looking for leads and would love to explore your hidden treasure. If you or someone you know has a unique item, story to tell, and is ready to sell ... we would love to hear from you! Please note, the Pickers DO NOT pick stores, flea



"American Pickers" follows skilled pickers as they hunt for America's treasures. Photo courtesy of Cineflix Productions

markets, malls, auction businesses, museums or anything open to the public. If interested, please send name, phone number, location and description of the collection with photos to: americanpickers@ cineflix.com or call (646)-493-2184.



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Gardening Guru Covers Latest Trends at Club Meeting

Story and photos by Gail Bullen **River Valley Times** Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - When is the best time to remove your grass? Why are young people so passionate about growing succulents? And why have orchids become so affordable?

Gardening expert Debbie Arrington explored these questions and more while discussing the latest trends for 2025 at the River Valley Garden Club meeting on Sept. 24.

A longtime gardening writer, Arrington co-created the daily blog Sacramento Digs Gardening. She is a master rosarian, which is similar to a master gardener but with a focus on roses. She also tests plants for hybridizers developing new varieties for the Sacramento area.

"I've killed hundreds of plants," she joked. "But that was the test. They need to know if a plant will grow in Sacramento weather or if it's just going to die."

Arrington's talk followed a short business meeting, which included announcements about upcoming gardening shows and field trips. A highlight of the evening was when Janet Mathews presented fellow garden club member Donna Hansen and her late husband, Phil, with an award for their contributions to the club. The award was a framed Penny Pines certificate, which the club earns by raising \$78 to replant an acre of land in the Eldorado National Forest. The club has been participating in this program for many years.

Low-Water Landscapes

Arrington pointed out that removing lawns has been a major trend over the past decade, and this will continue as thousands of new homes are built.

"When it comes down to watering people or grass, the people are going to get it." she said.

While lawns have their benefits — being aesthetically pleasing and providing a comforting oasis of green — they aren't always necessary.

"If you golf, you know you've got to have them, and if you have a dog or kids, you need a lawn," she said. But, she added, "If the only time you walk on your lawn is to mow it. there is something else you can do with that land."

One alternative is landscaping to support pollinators and birds that have lost much of their natural habitat.

"The amazing thing is that the critters will come even if you are surrounded by suburbia, warehouses or railroads," she explained.

While there are many ways to create a low-water landscape, Arrington favors a "living tapestry" that incorporates plants of various colors, textures,



Debbie Arrington discusses gardening trends for 2025 at the Sept. 24 meeting of the River Valley Garden Club. The Calathea Rattlesnake was the most popular houseplant in 2023.

and heights.

"The great thing about a garden like this is that it is a lot less work than a lawn," she noted.

Succulents and **Houseplants**

Succulents remain popular, especially among young gardeners.

"Young gardeners are really attracted to succulents because they are easy to care for. They don't need much light and actually grow well indoors," she said.

Another reason for their popularity is rooted in a trait that many young people share: the same drive that once made them collect Star Wars action figures.

"They approach gardening with the same attitude they had toward toys and cards," she said. "They want one of each, and they want to collect as many as they can."

Succulents also appeal to young people because they don't require much space, an important factor since many do not have yards. Additionally, their unique looks have made them

their gardening journey with houseplants, with Anthuriums and Aroids

"The ones that are really taking off are the ones that like to live in the same conditions we do," she said.

A prime example is the Calathea Rattlesnake, which was named Plant of the Year by America's Nurserymen last year.

"It's great for beginners, which means it's hard to kill," she explained. "It likes people-like temperatures, grows with very little water, fertilizer and sunlight."

Orchids

Arrington highlighted the current orchid mania, noting that moth orchids, which once cost \$40 to \$50 for a small plant, now sell for just \$10 at Trader Joe's. This price drop became possible after laboratories



Janet Mathews, left, presents a Penny Pines certificate to Donna Hansen in honor of her and her late husband Phil's contributions to the garden club.

discovered how to clone new plants from stem cells.

"With the cloning method, they can go from a single cell to a blooming plant in less than a year," she said. "Because they can grow them so quickly, they were able to significantly reduce the price."

In the past, propagating orchids through cuttings would take three to five years to produce a blooming plant.

Now, cloning thousands of new plants from a single orchid has also sped up the creation of new hybrids with striking colors and patterns.

Most orchids are cloned in Taiwan, where extensive botanical research is conducted.

"Then they send the ittybitty plants that are barely microscopic to growers in different countries," she explained.

Another benefit, she added, is that "these are inexpensive plants that many farmers can grow as a secondary crop. The plants you're buying at Trader Joe's were grown in Salinas."

Other Topics

Arrington also covered the slow flower movement, which encourages florists to buy locally grown blooms - even from backyard gardens - instead of importing them from South America.

In discussing rose trends, she noted that modern varieties no longer require dangerous pesticides. Dahlias are the second-most popular plant after roses "because of the size of the flowers."

A new showy hydrangea variety has also been developed to withstand Sacramento's hot weather.

As for climate, "We are finding out that our weather is getting more extreme," she told the gardening club.

"The hots are getting hotter. The wets are getting wetter. The dries are getting drier, but the cold, not so much. We are losing our chill hours."

To sign up for Arrington's daily blog, visit Sacdigsgardening. Californialocal.com.

The blog is also accessible through Facebook and Instagram.



social media stars. Arrington explained that millennials often start

being particularly popular.

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