



Wilton Winter Festival Draws Crowd

PAGE 2

Community Gets First Look at Jackson Highway Resilience Study

PAGE 3



RIVER VALLEY TIMES

41ST YEAR • ISSUE 24

Serving Rancho Murieta, Sloughouse, Wilton

DECEMBER 19, 2025

SEE INSIDE

THIRD WATER TANK IS TOPIC AT SERVICES DISTRICT MEETING



PAGE 6

TRUMP SIDES WITH AG IN WATER WARS



PAGE 7

WHICH PLAYERS TO KEEP AT ALL COSTS?



PAGE 7



Scan our QR Code for a direct link to our online edition!

PRSRTD STD. U.S. POSTAGE PAID CARMICHAEL, CA PERMIT NO. 350 OR CURRENT POSTAL CUSTOMER

Fuel Reduction Work Expands as Grant Nears Final Months

By Gail Bullen
River Valley Times Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - Registered professional forester Phyllis Banducci delivered an upbeat progress report Dec. 2, telling the Rancho Murieta Regional Fire Safe Council that on-the-ground work for the \$4.4 million Cosumnes Ladder Fuel Reduction Project is nearly complete and that Sacramento County has authorized additional acres for treatment before the grant ends at the end of March.

"I'm pleased to say that we have completed everything in the original contracts, except for two acres," Banducci said during the online meeting. Crews finished the remaining units on the Pilliken Ranch earlier that day and then moved into Deer Creek Hills to clean up blowdown from last winter's storms.

As the CAL Fire-funded project drew to a close, the county uncovered some remaining funds during budget reconciliation and asked Banducci to extend

Continued on page 4



Registered professional forester Phyllis Banducci is supervising the on-the-ground work for the Cosumnes Ladder Fuel Reduction project. Retired from CAL FIRE, she is a Rancho Murieta resident. Photo by Gail Bullen

CAL FIRE Names Wood Chief of Unit



David Wood is the new chief for the Amador-Eldorado Unit of CAL Fire. Wood began his firefighting career as a volunteer firefighter with the Wilton Fire Protection District. Courtesy Photo

CAL FIRE News Release

CAMINO, CA (MPG) - David Wood has been appointed by CAL FIRE Director Joe Tyler as the next unit chief of the Amador-El Dorado Unit (AEU), effective Nov. 17. Chief Wood is currently spending his first month in a training and mentoring role under Chief Mike Blankenheim and will assume full responsibility for the Unit on Dec. 19, following Chief Blankenheim's retirement.

Chief Wood began his fire service career in 1995 as a volunteer firefighter with the Wilton Fire Protection District. In 1996, he started his CAL FIRE career as a Firefighter I in AEU. He has worked in both Schedule A and Schedule B assignments, serving in various capacities including firefighter, fire apparatus engineer, fire apparatus engineer paramedic, fire captain, battalion chief, assistant chief, and deputy chief of Operations. His assignments have included positions in AEU, CAL FIRE Headquarters and as a Limited Term Unit chief in the Tuolumne-Calaveras Unit.

Chief Wood has served as a member of Incident Management Teams for more than 10 years. He currently serves as the deputy incident commander on CAL FIRE Incident Management Team 1 and the Sacramento Regional Type 3 Team.

Chief Wood has been actively involved in several CAL FIRE training cadres, including the Incident Management 3 cadre, C-300 Initial Attack to Extended Attack, C-400 Extended Attack to Major Incident, C-420 Command and General Staff, and the Complex Incident Management Course.

Chief Wood resides in El Dorado County with his wife and their two sons. As a family, they enjoy spending time outdoors: playing sports, swimming and camping. ★

Tour Visits Six Homes Looking Their Christmas Best



Linda Haviland admires the decorated home of Wendy Dunn as she participates in the Rancho Murieta Women's Club 2025 Holiday Home tour.

Story and photos by Gail Bullen
River Valley Times Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - Six Rancho Murieta homes were showcased during Deck the Halls – the 2025 Holiday Home Tour – presented

by the Rancho Murieta Women's Club on Dec. 13. Open to community members and their guests, the event drew 153 attendees.

Everyone interviewed expressed amazement at the creativity and effort that went into decorating the homes on the tour. One of them was Audrey

Langstroth, who has attended every holiday home tour since the event began about 20 years ago.

"I would say this one is my favorite in all of those years because there is more comfort and joy," Langstroth said.

Continued on page 12

Wilton Winter Festival Draws Crowd

By Patsy Nemetz

WILTON, CA (MPG) - The Wilton Winter Festival returned to the Wilton Community Center on Dec. 6, drawing several hundred residents despite chilly, foggy weather in sharp contrast to last year's unseasonably warm 60-degree day. Organizers said attendance was slightly lower than 2024's record turnout but described the event as another success.

The festival offered several free craft activities for children, including decorating a holiday frame, making an ornament, assembling a Santa and decorating sugar cookies. Kids received event "passports" stamped at each activity station; once completed, the kid were rewarded with a candy cane.

About 25 vendors participated, selling baked goods, crafts, kettle corn, and other items.

A pancake breakfast and a pulled-pork or chicken sandwich lunch were available for purchase, with proceeds benefiting local teachers.

The festival's highlight was the parade, which organizers said was one of the longest yet, with 18 entries, some featuring multiple vehicles. The Sacramento County Sheriff's Office reserve deputies assisted with road closures, and one reserve officer led the parade in the Sheriff's Office Mustang.

Longtime residents Bill and Alice Kutzer served as grand marshals.

The California Highway Patrol participated with a restored 1955 Buick Century from the CHP Museum. Also marching were Sacramento County Supervisor Pat Hume and members of his staff, Badger Creek 4-H, a local veterans group, Cub Scout Pack 16 and several Wilton residents and businesses.



Rylen and Dominique Roseli wave at a horse and buggy entry in the Wilton Winter Festival Parade on Dec. 6. The parade began at the Wilton Fire Department and ended at the Wilton Community Center. Courtesy photos



The Badger Creek 4H Club members and their animals participate in the parade.



Carter and Haley Bruce drive a QuadRunner wrapped as a present as part of the Henhouse Coffee parade entry. The adults are, from left, Stephanie Bruce, Sofia Richardson and Bella Grimes.



Parade marshals Bill and Alice Kutzer wave to the crowd.

The parade ended with the Wilton Fire Department escorting Santa to the community center, where children queued up for photos and shared their Christmas lists.

Volunteers served homemade cookies donated by local bakers and hot cocoa to help keep attendees warm.

The event was sponsored by the CSA 4B (Parks

& Rec) Council and the Wilton Community Center nonprofit.

See more photos at rivervalleytimes.com or on Facebook.



The Freitas Farm Bandits baseball players turn out in full force.



Tyler Williams drives the family Land Cruiser decorated for Christmas.



Dominique and Rylen Roseli enjoy themselves at the craft table.



Veterans wave to the crowd from their flag-decorated trailer.





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.

rmhl.acceleragent.net • 7281 Lone Pine Drive, Suite D102, Rancho Murieta, CA, 95683



Karen is a Presidential Award Holder with the Masters Club of the Sacramento Association of Realtors for over 39 years. This is the most prestigious award given.

Thank you to all of our clients in 2025 for another successful year.

BRE #00670687

Karen Hoberg,
Broker/Owner
(916) 947-6910

Rancho Murieta's Top Realtor for 45 Years and counting.
*Source: MLS for residential, Not including "Residential Income"

Community Gets First Look at Jackson Highway Resilience Study

Story and photos by Gail Bullen
River Valley Times Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - Rancho Murieta residents received an early look at Sacramento County's new Jackson Highway Resilience Study during two sparsely attended workshops held Nov. 17 and Nov. 18 at Rancho Murieta Community Church. The meetings marked the first of three planned public sessions for a project that began in August and is scheduled to run through December 2026.

Funded by a Caltrans planning grant, the study is examining the vulnerabilities of Jackson Highway in the event of an evacuation during a fire, flood or other disaster. The study area extends from Grant Line Road to Ione Road. Officials said the goal is to take a data-driven approach now so the county can pursue construction dollars later.

"This is about building a well-developed, defensible plan that positions us for future funding," said Gary Gasperi, senior engineer with the Sacramento County Department of Transportation, who led the overview.

Project Scope

Gasperi outlined the steps that will guide the study over the next two years. Although planning grants require extensive data collection and verification, the team expects to deliver a final plan to the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors by January 2027. Work includes evaluating existing conditions,

identifying system weaknesses and developing options to improve resilience.

Gasperi noted several known challenges, including the 2023 New Year's Eve flooding, low-lying areas along Jackson Highway, and culverts and crossings that may not be sized for changing storm patterns.

Survey Results

Consultant Travis Shappell of Resilient Communities presented findings from an initial survey with more than 230 responses. Most participants have lived in Rancho Murieta for a decade or longer, own their homes and typically live in two-person households. Many reported strong neighborhood cohesion: residents know one another, check on one another and are aware of vulnerable neighbors.

"People here care deeply about each other," Shappell said. "That's a major strength as we look at how a community can respond to disaster."

But the survey also revealed gaps in emergency preparedness. Most respondents do not have an emergency plan, a complete disaster kit or evacuation supplies in their vehicles. Few have ever taken part in a drill. Many also said they were unsure where to find clear preparedness information. Isolation remained the dominant concern. Wildfire topped the list of specific hazards, followed by flooding, drought, earthquake, smoke, extreme heat and impacts to the local ecosystem.

Despite the challenges,

Shappell said residents expressed a strong willingness to become better prepared once given guidance.

Flood Risk

Consultant Joseph Albani of Sherwood Design Engineers walked the audience through the existing conditions related to flood and wildfire risks.

"For us, the goal is to understand exactly how water and fire behave in this landscape so we can plan for what really happens, not what we assume happens," Albani told attendees.

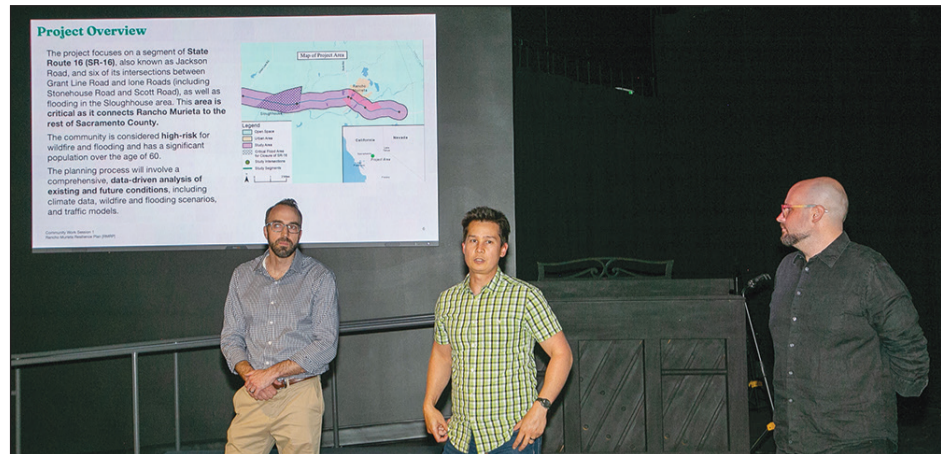
For flooding, Albani collaborated with the Department of Water Resources on Cosumnes River modeling and added analysis of the Deer Creek watershed. Using the Army Corps' HEC-RAS model, his team studied how culverts, bridges and roadway low points respond during storm events.

The results showed that Scott Road and Kiefer Boulevard are among the first roadways to flood and become impassable. Jackson Road and Dillard Road begin to flood around a 25-year storm event. Nevertheless, the Jackson Highway remains the most resilient route, although it has two critical weak spots.

Wildfire Risk

Albani said wildfire modeling involved Sacramento County OES, Metro Fire and CAL FIRE. He said about 60% of local fires are human-caused, driven mostly by arson, fireworks and equipment use.

Prevailing south-southwest winds typically push grassland fires toward



The speakers at the first community meetings about the Jackson Highway Resilience Study are, from left, Joseph Albani, a consultant; Gary Gasperi, a senior engineer at the Sacramento County Department of Transportation; and Travis Shappell, a consultant. The meetings were held on Nov. 17 and 18.



Attendees visit one of four informational stations following the presentation.

the community. But rare north-wind events could create fast-moving, highly dangerous fire behavior and drastically shorten evacuation times. Three preliminary models of north-wind fires showed flames reaching homes within 1.5 to 2.5 hours, with a third scenario bypassing the community to the west.

"Models show that spot fires (embers landing ahead of the main fire) are a major factor," the accompanying slide said. "This highlights the critical need to manage vegetation and tree canopies within and beyond the community to reduce the chance of wildfire spread, and structure-to-structure spread."

Community Input

Shappell closed the meeting by outlining the engagement process moving forward.

In addition to the initial survey, the project team will host two more in-person workshops in early 2026: one focused on infrastructure needs and another to review the draft implementation and feasibility plan.

Outreach will continue through River Valley Times, social media and email notifications.

"We're here to listen," Shappell said. "The plan is only as strong as the community input behind it."

Breakout tables at the November meeting asked residents to react to

existing conditions, survey findings, resilience goals, and fire and flood scenarios.

Shappell said the team is committed to adapting sessions to group size, incorporating community feedback and working closely with disaster-and-recovery partners.

"We want people to stay involved, respond to outreach and help shape the final plan," he said.

With the project running through 2026, officials say continued participation will be essential as the county works to address the region's most pressing natural-hazard risks.

This story is at therivervalleytimes.com or on Facebook. ★

RANCHO MURIETA AIRPORT

(916) 354-9889

20 minute drive from Folsom and El Dorado Hills

1,000, 1,500, 2,000, 3,000 Sq. ft.
Boutique Garages and Shop Space

Rancho Murieta

FEATURING

- Epoxy floors available
- Roll up and man door
- LED lighting
- 200 amp 3 phase power
- Pre plumbed for bathrooms
- Insulated
- Fire sprinklers

Share with a friend or relative

Great for indoor RV/Boat Storage or Extra Garage Storage

Conveniently located at Rancho Murieta Airport

• Internet Ready

RV & BOAT STORAGE • SELF STORAGE

STORAGE PRICING	
SIZE (WxL)	PRICE (\$/mo)
8 x 8:.....	\$127.00
8 x 10:.....	\$143.00
8 x 20:.....	\$212.00
8 x 40:.....	\$287.00

RV & BOAT PRICING	
SIZE (WxL) ...	PRICE (\$/mo)
11 x 20:.....	\$150.00
11 x 25:.....	\$155.00
11 x 30:.....	\$165.00
12 x 40:.....	\$185.00
12 x 50:.....	\$200.00

Office Hours Mon-Sat 8am-4pm
(Gate Hours 6am-7pm Daily)
24 Hour Video Surveillance • 50' Wide Drive Aisles
Dump Station • Propane Sales

7443 Murieta Drive, Rancho Murieta, CA 95683 • Visit us at www.rmairport.com
SALES • SERVICE • RENTALS • BATTERIES

GIPSON GOLF CARTS

AUTHORIZED DEALER
EZGO
A Textron Company

NEW LOCATION
7000 Alameda Dr.
Rancho Murieta, CA 95683
(over the hill at the driving range)

Zack Bowden
(916) 806-0920
zackbowden@gipsongolfcarts.com
www.gipsongolfcarts.com

Propane Available at Rancho Murieta Airport

Propane Tanks Refilled Here

Propane Tanks Refilled Here

Propane Tanks Refilled Here

only \$3.65 per gallon

Fuel Reduction Work Expands as Grant Nears Final Months

Continued from page 1

the work. She was ready: Two additional areas were already on her list.

The California Environmental Quality Act report for the project had been written to allow for the quick addition of newly available acres.

“Fortunately, we selected a large area for our CEQA document,” she said. “We have all the environmental information we need. We just have to do quick surveys and we’re good to go.”

Two Treatment Areas Added

The first additional treatment area consists of 11 acres located north of the Riverview development, above the area locally known as “South Beach” in Rancho Murieta South. Banducci said she had originally hesitated to include it because it had once been identified as a potential salamander habitat, which would have made treatment expensive. Updated reviews, however, found no such habitat.

“At one point in time, I had mentioned I wanted to treat that area because it’s just above where the kids play at the popular beach, and there are often bonfires there,” she said. “So we’re going to be able to treat that.”

The second new area, totaling about 32 acres of woodlands, lies within the Residences Subdivision in Rancho Murieta North. When the fuel-reduction plan was first developed, the subdivision didn’t have its final map, so its common-area parcels couldn’t be included. With mapping now approved, those acres qualify.

“Those are critical. They’re right behind homes on Puerto,” Banducci said. “The new homes aren’t built yet, so it is easier for equipment to work in the area.”

She added that developers Bob and Michele Keil “have been great to work with” as they finalize right-of-entry agreements.

Final Push into January

Banducci said she expects crews to spend only six to eight days in Deer Creek Hills before returning to Rancho Murieta in late December. Work is moving quickly, she added, including important follow-up



A photo taken on the Pilliken Ranch shows woodlands before treatment. Courtesy photo



A photo shows the same area after the treatment. Courtesy photo

treatments on areas cut last year.

“One of the last things that’s happening right now is they are cutting any of the stump sprouts we got from treatments that occurred last year,” she said. “They’re cutting those sprouts with loppers, and we are spraying those so we don’t create ladder fuels after we’ve cut them.”

For new thinning operations occurring now, workers are applying herbicide immediately after each cut.

“The treatment has to be within 45 minutes when we have a fresh stump,” she said. “So all of that is going on now at the same time: lots going on.”

Banducci estimated field work would be “completely finished by the end of January.”

Reporting, acreage reconciliation and other close-out requirements will continue.

“We have until March 31 to do those,” she said. “I

think we’re going to be in pretty good shape.”

Deer Creek Hills

Fire Safe Council President Greg Pryor asked Banducci about the 200-plus trees planted at the Deer Creek Hills Preserve under the grant. She said some must be replanted but deferred to Sacramento Valley Conservancy Executive Director Kelly Hopkins for more details.

“Deer Creek Hills is a challenging place to grow oaks. We don’t see a lot of regeneration,” Hopkins said. “I can say this is more successful than other mitigation projects that have taken place at Deer Creek Hills.”

Pryor asked whether funding had been secured for water buffaloes: large, mobile tanks used to water young trees in remote areas. Hopkins said the Conservancy worked out an arrangement with Sacramento County.

“There was a significant amount of cost savings because of the structure of



The map shows additional acreage in the Residences subdivision that has been authorized for fuel remediation. Courtesy photo



The map shows 11 acres behind the Riverview subdivision, which has also been added to the fuel-remediation project. Courtesy photo

that agreement,” she said. “Even though the grant is ending, we still are going to continue to water (the trees) and make sure that they’re successful... and that we’re doing through our general fund.”

Previous Work

The active on-the-ground work began in November 2024 and took on a new sense of urgency in January when devastating wildfires broke out in Los Angeles.

The first phase, which finished in February, focused on thinning, pruning, ground-fuel removal and heavy mastication across more than 900 acres inside Rancho Murieta, on ranch lands west of Scott Road and in the Deer Creek Hills Preserve. The work resumed in September.

Community Response

In a brief interview after the meeting, Banducci expressed her appreciation for the support from the

Scott Road landowners, the adjacent landowners and the community.

Banducci said that ranch owner Tom Pilliken dropped by weekly as the work progressed.

“He’d talk to the crews, look at the work they had done and express his appreciation at how much healthier his oak stands looked,” she said.

Adjacent landowners have also been talking to the crews, telling them, “Thank you. You are doing a great job and everything looks good,” she reported.

Grant Background

Banducci emphasized that the project would not have been possible without the Fire Safe Council. The council persistently applied for multiple grants and, to its amazement, ultimately secured the \$4.4 million CAL FIRE grant in 2022.

Banducci noted that Rob Schultz, who wrote the grant application, and council members Greg Pryor, Cheryl McElhany and Kelly Hopkins all

played key roles in securing the funding.

Assistance from former Sacramento County Supervisor Sue Frost was also crucial to the project. Because the Fire Safe Council wasn’t a non-profit, it needed a sponsor to apply for the CAL FIRE grant. Frost facilitated the involvement of Sacramento County Regional Parks, where staff member Veronica Thorley now serves as the project’s administrative manager.

The primary goal of the grant is to reduce ladder fuels, which involves pruning lower tree branches, thinning smaller trees and removing ground fuels.

“The objective is to manage the oak stand so that, if a fire enters the area, it remains a ground fire,” Banducci explained. “Crown fires generate significantly more embers, which can travel into our community and create serious risks.”

This story is at therivervalleytimes.com or on Facebook. ★

UBER OR LYFT ACCIDENT?

GUENARD & BOZARTH, LLP

PERSONAL INJURY ATTORNEYS

www.gblegal.com

(916) 714-7672

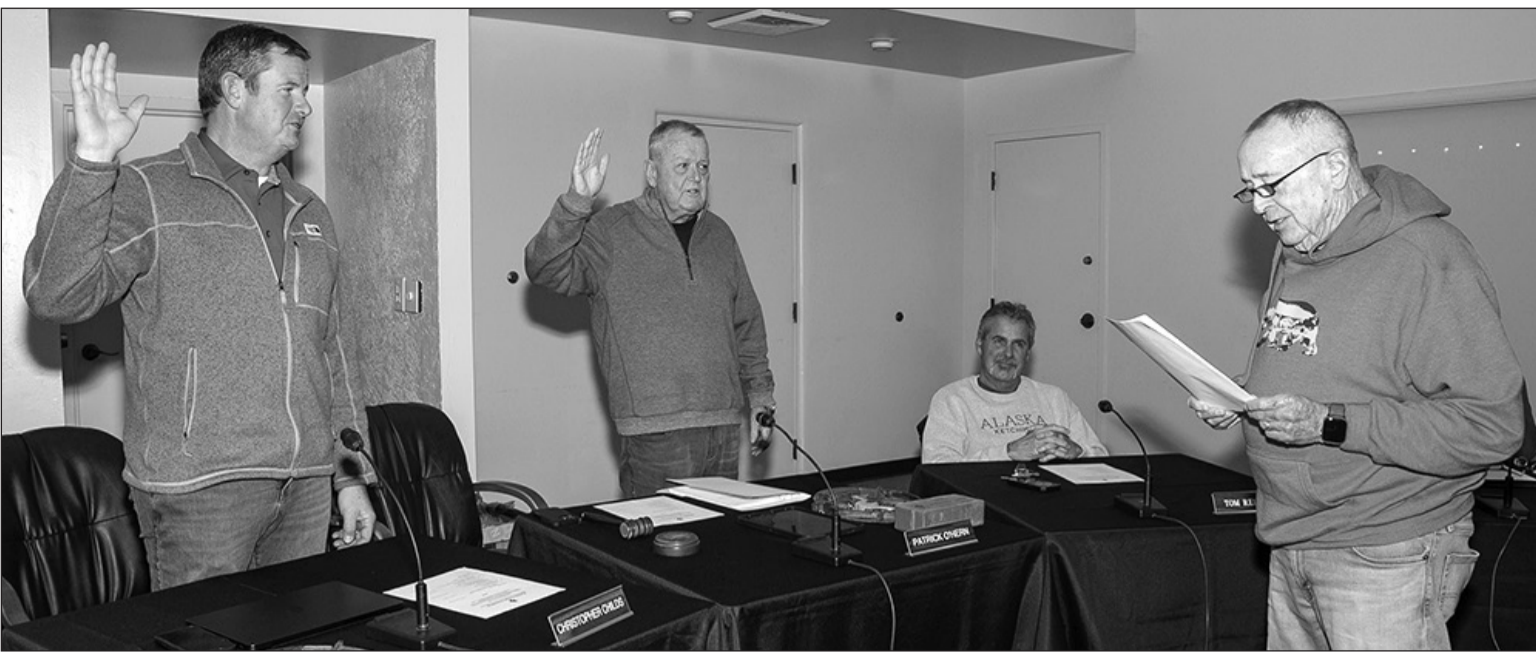
LOCAL
ARREST
RECORDS

Find out what's happening
in your local area at...

THERIVERVALLEYTIMES.COM

ARREST LOGS UPDATED DAILY

Two Directors Re-elected at Association Annual Meeting



The second time proved to be the charm when the Rancho Murieta Association Board held its annual meeting on Dec. 11. The meeting had originally been scheduled for Nov. 20 but was postponed after too few members returned ballots to meet the required 40% quorum. Inspector of Elections Jim Moore confirmed that more than enough ballots were received to meet the 20% quorum required for the rescheduled meeting, as permitted under a recent change in state law. After announcing that Director Chris Childs and Board President Patrick O'Hern had been re-elected to their uncontested seats, Moore administered the oath of office. The association also announced the winners of a raffle designed to encourage ballot participation. Six members won \$50 gift certificates, and a seventh resident received a Mini iPad. Photo by Gail Bullen

Recruitment, Evacuation Are Fire Safe Council Topics

By Gail Bullen
River Valley Times
Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG)

- Recruiting new board members and laying the groundwork to pursue additional grants were key topics at the Rancho Murieta Regional Fire Safe Council's quarterly Zoom meeting on Dec. 2.

The group also discussed the challenges of evacuating during a fire or flood and heard updates about how other communities are proactively addressing wildfire threats.

Registered professional forester Phyllis Banducci also provided an update on the Cosumnes Ladder Fuel Reduction project, funded by a \$4.5 million CAL FIRE grant. (See the separate story in this issue.)

Recruitment

Council member Kelly Hopkins expressed concern that the Fire Safe Council is relying on too few active participants and needs to recruit new members and urged the group to broaden its base. Hopkins is the executive director of the Sacramento Valley Conservancy, which manages the Deer Creek Hills Preserve behind Rancho Murieta.

"Sorry to sound like a broken record on this," Hopkins said, "but we need recruitment. And how do we get the people who say that they're involved to show up? Because if they aren't showing up, they're not involved."

Hopkins emphasized that the council didn't just need warm bodies; it needed specific kinds of voices: people connected to the community, those working in insurance and real estate, ranchers, equestrians, mountain bikers and residents who care about Rancho Murieta's safety and their ability to insure their homes.

"I put the ask out there," Hopkins said, "I guarantee there is somebody who's in real estate or in insurance who's trying to grow their résumé and show that they're involved in the community and give back to the community that is supporting their business."

Invited guest Brenna Howell recommended another key step to keep the Fire Safe Council viable. A Rancho Murieta resident, Howell is the fire safe coordinator for the Sacramento County Office of Emergency Services and has more than 20 years of experience in emergency management. She frequently attends the group's meetings.

Howell stressed the need to build a foundation beneath the council's early successes.

"What you guys have



Phyllis Banducci and Brenna Howell make telling comments during the Rancho Murieta Regional Fire Safe Council's Zoom meeting on Dec. 2. The photo depicts them at a past Fire Safe council event. File photo by Gail Bullen



Greg Pryor continues to serve as president of the Fire Safe Council, a role he has held since his election in 2019. File photo by Gail Bullen

done from the very beginning was grassroots, just coming together. Just trying to do the right thing," she said. "Then you got a \$4.4 million grant right out of the gate, which is like a dream for organized 501(c)(3) nonprofits.

"Now we've got to keep it going."

Howell said the next step is to develop a Community Wildfire Protection Plan that documents the council's past work, ties its efforts into the county's hazard mitigation planning and ensures that future grants can build on what has already been accomplished rather than starting from scratch.

Board President Greg Pryor added perspective about the passage of time. At 71, he noted he isn't getting any younger and no longer lives in the community, though he still owns a home. He remains strongly committed to the group's work but said he eventually wants to pass the responsibility to someone new.

"I really am very proud of that half million dollars

we got on the (Jackson Highway) infrastructure study. We're over \$5 million. We've really been very fortunate," he said. "But now we need to infuse new blood, people who live here, that have skin in the game, and ongoing participation to carry this on."

During the discussion, Hopkins outlined a first step: creating a simple Google form to gauge interest in joining the board, followed by individual interviews to determine who would be a good fit.

Pryor said he would draft some language and send it to Hopkins for refinement. The group also discussed different ways to send it out to the community.

Howell said she would help to develop a Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

"I don't want all of that hard work and dedication of the past years to get lost."

Howell also assured Pryor that the work could be done remotely.

"We can do it all via



Kelly Hopkins, who is the executive director of the Sacramento Valley Conservancy, stresses the need to recruit new board members for the Fire Safe Council. Courtesy photo

email and meet on a special Zoom just for documentation and planning," she said.

Later in the meeting, Howell described the idea of hosting community workdays to assist residents who need help managing vegetation on their properties, similar to efforts underway elsewhere in the state. After identifying homes, securing waivers from owners, arranging liability coverage and coordinating with Cal Waste, "we can organize a day where volunteers go in, limb up trees, clear their property and clean up around the house," she said.

Evacuation

The council also discussed the challenges of evacuating during floods with Howell, retired traffic engineer John Long, and Patrick Ervin, the engineer for Reclamation District 800, which oversees the Cosumnes River levees. All agreed that flood evacuation is inherently fluid and uncertain – driven by real-time conditions rather

than a simple river-gauge threshold – and that road inundation on Jackson Highway, Dillard Road and Highway 16 is as critical as river height when deciding whether to evacuate, issue warnings or advise residents to shelter in place.

Pryor and Long also addressed wildfire evacuation, noting that they would be meeting with consultants studying the issue as part of the Rancho Murieta Resiliency Plan, which is focused largely on vulnerabilities along Jackson Highway, both for fire evacuations and for access during floods.

They expressed concern about the gap between the time it takes to evacuate once an incident commander issues the order and the time a wildfire could overrun those timelines. That discrepancy, they said, makes the decision to trigger the evacuation the critical unresolved issue.

Other Communities

Pryor pointed to Marin County as a model for how a region can organize and

fund long-term wildfire preparedness. After early meetings at the Capitol with the insurance commissioner and several fire chiefs – including one from Marin – all of the fire departments in the county joined together to form a Joint Powers Authority focused on reducing wildfire risk. Voters later approved a special tax that now generates about \$22 million annually, providing sustained funding for home-hardening assistance and fuel-reduction work.

Pryor also reported on efforts underway in the Tahoe Basin. He described how the region has spent more than a decade working on fuel reduction, evacuation planning and community protection. He said he had circulated a study and organizational layout from the basin that illustrates how multiple agencies coordinate wildfire preparedness and work from the center of the community outward to reduce the risk of fire spotting into town.

Background

The evolution of the Fire Safe Council began in 2018, when Rancho Murieta Association Director Cheryl McElhany volunteered to lead an ad hoc committee to examine emergency preparedness in the community and develop an Emergency Preparedness Plan. That plan is still available on the RMA website.

The RMA Board formally created the Fire Safe Council as a board subcommittee in 2019, and the group elected retired firefighter Greg Pryor as its president. But after extended debate over the use of remote gates for emergency evacuations, the RMA Board and the group agreed to separate in 2023. Since then, the group has continued as a satellite Fire Safe Council, collaborating with the Sacramento County Fire Safe Council.

The Fire Safe Council has two major accomplishments under its belt. The first was securing a \$4.4 million CAL FIRE grant in 2022 for ladder fuel reduction in and around the community.

The second was collaborating with retired Supervisor Sue Frost to obtain a \$400,000 Caltrans grant for the Rancho Murieta Resiliency Plan, which is examining the vulnerabilities of Jackson Highway in the event of a fire or a flood.

The council's next scheduled meeting will be held on March 3. It is also beginning preparations for the next Wildfire Community Preparedness Day event on May 2.

This story is at therivervalleytimes.com and on Facebook. ★

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 rmcsd.com.

Dec. 2

7:27 p.m., Report of reckless driving at Murieta Airport that occurred between 2 to 3 a.m. Nov. 25. Airport surveillance cameras captured white Ford pickup and black Lexus sedan enter the airport and began to drive through the area at high speed, spinning donuts and doing burnouts. After reviewing Murieta Drive traffic cameras, patrol was able to positively identify both vehicles. Patrol contacted both residents,

advised of the Murieta Airport complaint and Murieta Airport request of verbal trespass warning.

8:29 p.m., RMA Violation, Colbert Drive (Murieta South): Vehicle parked in front of fire hydrant, blocking access. Citation issued.

Dec. 3

2 p.m., report of reckless driving at Murieta Airport that occurred at about 1:15 a.m. Nov. 27. Murieta Airport surveillance cameras captured Infinity sedan entering the airport and began spinning donuts and burnouts, leaving tire skid marks. Murieta Drive traffic camera review positively identified vehicle as guest of Rancho Murieta, that registered to

numerous residences.

Dec. 9

3:50 p.m., Male transient attempted to enter RMA yard from Stonehouse Road. RMA maintenance supervisor was able verbally to stop the subject and turn him away. Subject left area and continued southbound on Stonehouse Road. Patrol located subject near ATT building at Stonehouse Road and Jackson Road; patrol made contact. Subject was agitated, claiming he needs to go westbound toward Sacramento.

Subject was given directions to Sacramento, but subject continued to walk eastbound on Jackson Road. Subject did not request any medical attention.

Dec. 10

2:23 a.m., Parking Violation, Magno Court (Murieta South): Resident parking in guest parking overnight. Citation issued.

3:40 p.m., Patrol located a Honda Odyssey parked in front of fire hydrant. Vehicle registered as contractor at Reynosa Drive. Patrol located the driver, requested to move vehicle; driver complied without incident.

4:50 p.m., Stop Sign violation: Pera Drive at Lago Drive outbound, vehicle approached intersection, and without coming to a complete stop proceeded right on Lago Drive from Pera Drive. Citation issued. ★

Third Water Tank is Topic at Services District Meeting



A simulation shows a third water tank nestled in the trees, as would be seen from a home along Lake Chesbro. It was one of five simulations shown at the Dec. 4 meeting of the Rancho Murieta Community Services Improvements Committee. Courtesy photo

By Gail Bullen
River Valley Times Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - The need for a third water tank was again the dominant topic when the Rancho Murieta Community Services District Improvements Committee met on Dec. 4.

But the only action taken after an hour of discussion was to agree to a request by Bob Keil, the developer of the Residences subdivision. Keil asked whether the district engineer and his engineer could collaborate on calculations to determine how many homes the Rio Oso Tank could serve, given the new throttling valve under construction at the water treatment plant, landscaping restrictions in his subdivision and the implementation of water conservation.

Saying it would be easy enough to consider different criteria, District Engineer Joe Domenichelli indicated he could have an answer by the next committee meeting. In March, when the engineer proposed a new throttle valve to regulate water levels in the Rio Oso tank, he estimated it would enable the tank to serve 50 more homes based on the average daily flow.

In between, three related topics came up. The first was the need for a third tank for emergency storage, even without the development. The second concerned a recent letter that Interim General Manager Amelia Wilder sent to Keil requiring that he pay the entire cost of a third water tank. She announced at the meeting that the letter was no longer valid.

Domenichelli also presented renderings of how a third water tank would appear from a distance. Of the five locations, it couldn't be seen in three, was barely visible in the fourth and was unobtrusive in the fifth. See the rendering accompanying this story.

Jeff Pearson, a representative from Rancho Murieta Properties, which is proposing the Rancho North subdivision, also spoke about another water-related issue.

"In 2012, you commissioned a study, and I think that there was grant money involved with the commissioning of that study that lasted more than two years," he said. "And you guys got all the way down the road to bid. I mean, you had electromagnetic studies done. You had wells identified... The thing went out to bid... and it got killed (in approximately 2015 to 2016), he said.

In other topics at the meeting, the committee considered an audience member's request to set time limits on board meetings, approved a change to a water meter program to make it more cost-effective and briefly discussed water conservation.

The board also received an update on repairs at the 6B lift station.

The Improvements Committee is comprised of Board President John Merchant, Director Randy Jenco, Interim Operations Manager Travis Bohannon, Interim General Manager Amelia Wilder and other staff. The committee looks at infrastructure issues in depth and makes recommendations to the entire board.

Rio Oso Options

Bohannon placed an update from Keil as the first agenda item, saying that he had stated at the last board meeting that he had a plan to get water to his development without the need for a third tank.

Keil told the committee that demand for his project could probably be met without a new tank by tying into the Van Vleck tank with boosters. But he argued that would be a poor use of money because it only solves his subdivision's problem and leaves the district's broader emergency storage and Rio Oso rehabilitation issues untouched. He said he would rather put those dollars "into a bigger pot" for a solution that benefits both the district and his project.

Keil also asked if the district's engineer and his own engineer would work together to calculate "real numbers" on how many homes could be served by the existing Rio Oso tank, with improved valving and conservation.

"So my request to the improvements committee is to allow our engineers to work together on a solution, cost sharing for valving communications, and remodel of the Rio so tank and see if we can make it work that way."

When Merchant pressed Keil about a solution with or without a third tank, he said, "I would like to look at the options. I thought we were on the right track with the tank and with us paying a share of it through impact fees."

That was before Wilder sent him the Nov. 19 demand letter.

"We are talking about 130 lots. You can't balance a \$7, 8, 3, or 4 million tank on 130 lots," he said. "Even if we wanted to do it, we couldn't do it."

Emergency Storage

Bohannon and Domenichelli agreed that Rio Oso needs work and that the district has an emergency storage problem. They also drew an important line between daily demand and emergency protection.

Bohannon reported on the condition of the Rio Oso tank based on an inspection done by a company hoping to win rehab work. Without even entering the tank, they found serious deterioration: The interior



Jeff Pearson, from Rancho Murieta Properties, recalls how a prior board killed a project to drill wells. Photo by Gail Bullen

ladder is almost rusted through, some of the top steel was not properly coated during the 2009 rehab and is now badly rusting, and they strongly recommend a complete rehab of Rio Oso within about five years.

"It's in need of some love," he said.

Bohannon also noted that, after the earlier incident in which a hydrant break drained Rio Oso and forced an emergency "stop using water" notice, staff have long discussed the need for additional emergency storage.

At the same time, he was clear that, as of now, the existing system can meet the current daily demand for the 800 existing homes without adding a new tank. The emergency storage question is a different, longer term issue.

Domenichelli focused on the longer term and system risk. He said he has repeatedly stated that the district does not have enough emergency storage in the Rio Oso Tank pressure zone (serving 800 homes above Guadalupe Drive.)

Using examples like the hydrant incident and a week of 100 plus degree weather where Rio Oso's level fluctuated dangerously, the engineer explained that if a key supply line failed in midsummer, the existing storage would not provide enough time to repair it while still reliably serving customers.

In his view, simply rehabbing Rio Oso without adding more storage volume does not solve the core problem: Rio Oso "is not going to get bigger," he said.

Rescinded Letter

During the discussion, Jenco said he was confused about a district letter that Keil said required him to cover the entire cost of a third tank.

Wilder said it was the letter that Merchant and Gere worked on, indicating that District Counsel Patrick Enright was also involved.

After Wilder showed Jenco the letter, he said he recalled seeing a copy "in closed session, in which we decided not to send it. This district is out of control... You people are running this district like you own it."

Jenco said he was not questioning whether the district has enough water or needs another tank.

"I'm talking about the process that's going on and the policies that are being ignored by the board and the acting general manager. Something has got to change."

Keil provided the River Valley Times with Wilder's letter, which she emailed on Nov. 19. The letter stated that Keil would be required to provide a water tank before the district would issue a water meter for the 51st lot. (When Domenichelli first proposed a throttling valve, he estimated it would allow Rio Oso to serve 50 additional homes.)

"The future demand of your project has created the demand for this infrastructure in the 198-lot subdivision. The district has, at this time, no current demand for an additional potable water storage tank to service the Residences. Therefore, the construction of a new tank is the sole responsibility of the Residences' Development."

Wilder announced that the letter had been rescinded at the end of the discussion about a third tank.

"I say that until further notice, that letter is not valid or accurate, that we need to have a lot more discussion: looking at the developer fee study, and working on how much water we actually need and what our emergency supply is," she said.

Earlier, the River Valley Times asked Jenco why a letter about a development matter had been discussed in executive session. That is because the issue does not fall under the limited exceptions in California's open meetings law that allow closed sessions.

"I think that is a question for Patrick (Enright)," Jenco said. "It will absolutely be asked."

Enright answered the question in a Dec. 11 letter to the board, saying the Brown Act allows closed sessions for significant exposure to threatened litigation.

"The closed session was to address Bob Keil's repeated threats of litigation if he does not receive his water meters for his project," he wrote.

This story is at therivervalleytimes.com and on Facebook. ★

Kings Korner

By V.G. Harris



The Sacramento Kings had a rough week. Whether it's at Golden One or on the road, the 2025-26 campaign has not been a pleasant experience.

Diehard fans will likely point to injuries, and you would have a point, but injuries alone cannot account for losing 20 games in the first 26 contests. There is more to the story.

The Kings as they are currently assembled do not match up with bigger teams. Does that mean that the Kings need to build a team that resembles the Oklahoma City Thunder? Well, it wouldn't be a bad idea, but easier said than done, it's important to note that there are a host of players under 6 feet, 6 inches that are difference makers in this league.

Well, I don't pretend to be able to read the mind of Scott Perry, but if you listen to him, he will tell you that he has autonomy and will be the architect of what is apparently going to be a rebuilding season. Perry has alluded to this experience likely taking three to five years, which no one wants to hear.

For me, I can condense the process to five players that I would keep at all costs.

Domantas Sabonis has had little time on the hardwood this season due to injury, but make no mistake about it, he is a difference maker. Any player that can lead the league in double-doubles, year over year, while also leading the league in rebounding three years running, is someone you need to covet. Sabonis also led the league in triple-doubles two years ago, so there you have an anchor on your team that simply needs to stay.

The Kings are guard heavy, but their young guards have yet to see their potential. Players like Nique Clifford and even Devin Carter have not had sufficient time for fans to see what could be an incredible upside. Keep these youngsters and remember why you made them number one draft choices.

Keegan Murray had a rookie season three years ago that was eye popping because he was living up to his hype. The NCAA scoring champ out of Iowa set a Sacramento franchise record of 11 consecutive threes, and a total of twelve three-pointers in one game.

Keegan's experience in Sacramento has been up and down, but this year could be a breakout year for the young baller that has not just the shooting ability, but a knack for defense as well. Keep him!

Maxime Reynaud is getting game time due to Domantas being sidelined and he is giving Kings fans a glimpse of what this seven-footer can do. He is my fifth pick to stay.

As our Sactown ballers lost three games last week by a total of 56 combined points, I glanced around the league to see who might be a player that could bring a steadiness to this lineup. One player, although a guard, was Austin Reeves, who managed to drop 51 points on the Kings earlier this season when both LeBron James and Luca Doncic were sidelined with injuries. The same Austin Reeves that just 4 years ago went undrafted by all 30 NBA teams and would eventually be signed to a two-way contract as a walk-on by the LA Lakers.

In high school, Reeves scored 73 points in one game and won back-to-back state titles. Reeves went on to play for Oklahoma averaging 32 points per game as a senior while making the NCAA tournament. How does the entire league miss on a talent that is having the time of his life playing in the NBA?

As I've said before, the Kings need to find someone that can assess talent and hit home runs. It needs to happen sooner rather than later, so right now would be just fine.

Are you listening, Doug Christie? You have a player sitting on your bench by the name of Doug McDermott that can shoot threes like everyone else shoots free throws, and he needs to find a place in your rotation. With six wins to show for the season, what are you waiting for?

Just as Austin Reeves was a welcome surprise, maybe McDermott could bring some much-needed energy to this team.

Stay tuned Kings fans because we're only 25 percent of the way into the season!

All the best and a very Merry Christmas!

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

Trump Sides with Agriculture Again in California's Never-Ending Water Wars



By Dan Walters, CALMatters.org

From the onset of his foray into presidential politics a decade ago, Donald Trump has been obsessed with managing California's water, often interjecting himself into decades-long conflicts over how the precious commodity should be divvied up.

During his first stint as president, Trump was heavily influenced by the Westlands Water District, a huge agricultural water agency in the San Joaquin Valley that sought more irrigation water for itself and other farm interests.

That relationship led to an extremely controversial contract that guaranteed Westlands as much as 1 million acre-feet of water each year from the federal Central Valley Project, solidifying the district's supply situation. Lacking water rights, Westlands had historically depended on temporary contracts to meet members' demands.

The new contract angered environmental groups because it threatened to reduce flows through the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta for wildlife habitat. The groups sued and won rulings against the contract in trial and appellate courts.

After Trump moved back into the White House in January, he immediately picked up where he left off, issuing an order to federal water officials to maximize deliveries in California.

He also complained that

a shortage of water deliveries to Southern California was a factor in the rapid spread of deadly wildfires in Los Angeles County, claiming that the state's efforts to protect "an essentially worthless fish called a smelt" was at fault.

"Governor Gavin Newsom refused to sign the water restoration declaration put before him that would have allowed millions of gallons of water, from excess rain and snow melt from the North, to flow daily into many parts of California, including the areas that are currently burning in a virtually apocalyptic way," Trump wrote on his social media site, Truth Social.

Newsom's office rebuked the claim, saying, "There is no such document as the water restoration declaration — that is pure fiction."

Meanwhile, Trump's executive order pushed the Bureau of Reclamation to modify how it operates the Central Valley Project, a complex of reservoirs — including Lake Shasta — and canals that captures runoff from Northern California mountains and supplies water agencies in the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys.

Last week, the bureau announced an operational modification that would increase annual water deliveries by 130,000 to 180,000 acre-feet from the Central Valley Project and another 120,000 to 220,000 from the State Water Project, the latter chiefly generated from the Oroville Dam on the Feather River. The two projects share management of the Sacramento River and its tributaries.

"This updated operations plan reflects our commitment to using the best available science to increase water deliveries while safeguarding the environment and honoring the legacy of the Central Valley Project's

90 years of service," Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum said in a statement.

The announcement sparked reactions, both pro and con, that reflect the state's long-running water allocation battles — praise from Westlands and other agricultural water agencies that are facing supply reductions from regulation of groundwater use and condemnation from state officials and environmental groups.

"These operational refinements reflect a thoughtful, data-informed approach that strengthens water supply availability for growers while maintaining California's commitment to environmental stewardship," Westlands said in a statement.

Newsom spokesperson, Tara Gallegos, had another take: "The Trump administration is putting politics over people — catering to big donors instead of doing what's right for Californians. As per usual, the emperor is left with no clothes, pushing for an outcome that disregards science and undermines our ability to protect the water supply for people, farms, and the environment."

For their part, state water officials say they have no intention of matching the Bureau of Reclamation's new operational rules.

So here we go again, another chapter in the war over water that began when California became a state 175 years ago. It's probably headed to the courts and will probably outlast not only Newsom's governorship but Trump's presidency.

Dan Walters is one of the most decorated and widely syndicated columnists in California history, authoring a column four times a week that offers his view and analysis of the state's political, economic, social and demographic trends. ★

Social Security Matters About Remarrying and Benefits from an Ex-spouse



By Russell Gloor, AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor

Dear Rusty: I am almost 57, divorced after a 14-year marriage. My former spouse is 15 years older than I and made significantly more money than me. I am required to retire from my job at age 60 but expect to keep working in some capacity.

I have a girlfriend of a similar age to me. She did not earn as much as her former husband as she mainly raised their children. She is also divorced from an older spouse who made more money than she did. I am trying to figure out if we will be penalized if we marry, or if it matters if we wait until after we reach 60 years of age. Can I claim my own benefits when I become eligible at 62, then claim survivor benefits later, whenever my former spouse passes? Is that affected if, or when, I remarry? I do not want to give up my potential survivor benefits from my ex-spouse. Are those affected if I remarry?

If I understand correctly, if I remarry even after 60, we would both forfeit divorced spousal benefits, is that right? Given that my girlfriend's former spouse

probably made more money than I, would she be forfeiting her former spousal benefits if we were to marry, even after age 60?

Lastly, I am considering retiring abroad as an expat. Any suggestions about how that would affect our Social Security benefits? **Signed: Starting Over**

Dear Starting Over: With certain exceptions, benefits from a living ex-spouse cannot be collected if you remarry (regardless of your age when you remarry). So, from what you've shared, whenever you remarry both you and your new wife will forfeit eligibility for benefits from your respective ex-spouses while they are living (FYI, there are exceptions for those who are disabled).

However, the rules are different for a surviving ex-spouse: if you remarry before age 60, you will forfeit your surviving ex-spouse benefit. But if you remarry after age 60, you retain eligibility to collect survivor benefits from a deceased former spouse. So, if you and your girlfriend remarry after you are both age 60, you will both still be able to claim survivor benefits based on your former spouses' records.

And, yes, it is possible for you to initially claim your own SS retirement benefit at 62 and claim your surviving ex-spouse benefit later (after your former spouse dies). Provided you remarry after age 60 you do not lose that option, but if you were to claim a surviving ex-spouse benefit before reaching your full retirement age (FRA), the monthly payment amount would be reduced (all SS benefits taken before FRA are reduced).

Note too, that if you plan

to continue working after you are first eligible for SS benefits, Social Security has an "earnings test" which limits how much you can earn from working while collecting early benefits. The limit changes yearly (for 2025 it is \$23,400) and if exceeded, SS will take back \$1 in benefits for every \$2 you are over the limit. And as you likely know, claiming at age 62 will also mean a benefit payment of about 30% less than available at your FRA of 67. So, if you plan to work after age 62 and plan to claim early SS, you should take the "earnings test" into consideration. FYI, the earning test no longer applies after you reach your full retirement age.

Now, regarding retiring overseas, be aware that Social Security has limits on where you can collect U.S. Social Security benefits. I suggest you use Social Security's Payments Abroad Screening Tool to find out if benefits are payable wherever you plan to retire abroad. That SSA tool can be found here:

www.ssa.gov/international/payments_outsideUS.html

This article is intended for information purpose: only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinion: and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation's staff trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association (NSSA). NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org. ★



Europe Has Made Itself An Afterthought

of the U.S., "decline is a choice."

This isn't quite right with regard to Europe, whose great powers were kneecapped by the cataclysms of the early 20th century. France bore the brunt of World War I, suffering 1.4 million dead and 4.3 million wounded and a ruinous economic cost.

As for Britain, stretched to the max, it got steadily eclipsed in power and influence by the United States as World War II progressed. The less said about Germany's role in all this, of course, the better. And then the European colonial empires inevitably dissolved. So, Europe was going to be diminished compared to its glory days. Its current fecklessness, though, has indeed been a choice, borne of strategic fantasy and economic incompetence.

Strong militaries were deemed as a thing of the past, or something unnecessary as long as Uncle Sam was around. The Brits, for instance, are hard-pressed to maintain a 73,000-strong army, and the size of their once-storied surface fleet is at a historic low.

Europe imagined itself "a diplomatic superpower," but has learned to regret that "soft power" not backed up by hard power is of limited utility. Both the Nobel Committee and Amnesty International have considerable soft power, too, but no one pays attention to them regarding high-level geopolitical questions.

Economically, the EU "regulatory superpower"

has hobbled growth -- over the last 30 years, Western European labor productivity declined from 95% of the U.S. level to 80% -- while Europe's commitment to "net zero" greenhouse emissions has driven insane energy priorities. Years into the Ukraine war, Europe is still dependent on gas imports from Russia.

None of this means that the U.S. should go out of its way to give Europe the back of its hand. Whatever its other failings, Europe has collectively given Ukraine more aid than the United States, and was justifiably furious at the initial 28-point Ukraine proposal. That plan had the embattled country handing over to Moscow strategically important territory that is still in Ukrainian hands; agreeing to a limit on the size of its military; and the U.S. taking currently frozen Russian assets in Europe to rebuild Ukraine (getting 50% of any profits) and to pursue joint investment projects with Russia.

Negotiations with the Ukrainians have reportedly produced a more reasonable version, but it is Washington and Moscow that matter most here.

The analyst Robert Kagan famously wrote years ago that, in their divergent approaches to the world, "Americans are from Mars and Europeans are from Venus." Having long outsourced power politics to Mars, it turns out that Venus has limited influence even in her own backyard.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.

(c) 2025 by King Features Synd., Inc. ★

Achievements Honored at 'Tees the Season'

By Nancy Clevenger

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - The Rancho Murieta Country Club's Women's Golf Club went festive this week with its annual end-of-the-year holiday, themed "Tees the Season." Top award recipients were announced along with some of their activities during the event, which included lunch, entertainment and the changing of the club's leadership.

Chef KC Brown prepared a delicious noon meal of a seasonal salad, garlic chicken, blackened salmon or butternut squash ravioli, finished with a caramel-topped holiday cheesecake. About 100 lady golfers, along with guests from the pro shop including golf pro Brian Little, noshed among the cheerful crowd.

Those receiving cash-outs for top achievements were announced by Birdies & Chip-In Chair Jena McDonald. Holing the ball from off the green a total of eight times this season was Helen Kang, earning \$28. Kang also won honors of sinking the most birdies this season, numbering 28.



Handicap Chairperson Doris Hanson and Captain Jan Valine present Most Improved Golfer trophy to recipient Jacqui Langenberg. Photos courtesy of Nancy Clevenger

Eclectic winners were presented by Eclectic Chair Mary Ann Amburn, announcing Denice Murck-Kilgour who improved by 27 strokes on the North Course, and Alicia Newman improved on the South Course by 26 strokes. Each walked away with a \$25 award.

Chair Doris Hanson announced the "Most Improved Golfers" for 2025, with top honors going to Jacqui Langenberg, who improved her index from 29.6 to 23.6. Langenberg took home the engraved perpetual trophy and pride in her golf game.

Susie Chase, Jacqui Langenberg, Liz Pinson

and Candi Stafford were introduced as the newest members of the club and membership now at 102 ladies. Welcomed back to the golfing friends was Vicky Reynolds, as announced by Membership Chair Sharon Crosswell.

Throughout the year, RMCC Women's Golf Club collects monies for charities through a 50/50 raffle. The recipients for this year's funds included Mustard Seed and Mary's House, both organizations helping women and children during housing and schooling transitional times. Carla Zuehlke successfully maintained the funds and presented them to the two organizations.

GOLF SCORES



2025 Captain Jan Valine hands off the gavel to incoming 2026 Captain Kris Trigales.

Captain Jan Valine thanked her 2025 Executive Board and passed the gavel to 2026 Captain Kris Trigales, who, in turn, introduced her Executive Board. RMCC's very own Laura Koon then led the club

members in "The Twelve Days of Christmas," followed by a festive golf twist on "Jingle Bells" and "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Golfer." Laughter and singing concluded the program for the year.

JoAnn Young and Kathy

Jaime organized the merry and inviting event for the members. It included holiday-themed golf decorations, including cozy socks, and golf tees for all guests, complementing the theme. Captain Jan also provided each guest with homemade "birdie juice" to add brightness to the golfing spirit. The gathering concluded with smiles on faces, songs in their hearts and anticipation of next year's golfing season.

Women golfers who are golf members of RMCC are welcome to join the women's golfing club. A variety of formats are played with the goal of making golf exciting, challenging and fun. For more information, contact 2026 Captain Kris Trigales at ktristrig@csus.edu or Membership Chair Sharon Crosswell, Sharoncrosswell7700@gmail.com.

★

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Kiwanis Club Opens Crab Feed Sales on Jan. 10

The Kiwanis Club of Rancho Murieta's 12th Annual Crab Feed will be held Saturday, Jan. 31 at the St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church Social Hall. The Crab Feed is the club's largest fundraiser of the year, supporting programs for children, youth and families, including the Easter Egg Hunt, scholarships and youth sports and scouting.

A limited number of tickets will go on sale Saturday, Jan. 10 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. (or while supplies last) in front of The Local Bean in the Plaza Shopping

Center. Cash and credit cards will be accepted. For ticket information, contact Jeannette at 408-515-2636.

The club is also collecting raffle items for its popular raffle baskets. Retail and restaurant gift cards, certificates for services, wine, beer, décor, pet items and art are all welcome. Higher-priced items may be designated for the silent auction. To donate items, contact Bonnie at 916-502-3260.

For updates, follow the Kiwanis Club of Rancho Murieta on Facebook or visit rmkiwanis.org. Thank you for your continued generous support.

★

Local Classifieds Advertise in your local community newspaper Call 916-685-5533

Concrete	Job Listing	Landscaping	Automotive	Roofing
<p>Perez Landscaping & Concrete</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Concrete Finishing/Stamping •Landscape installation and Design •Sodding, •Planting •Irrigation •Retaining Walls •Yard maintenance. <p>Free estimates. Fore more info. call 916-834-2352 email: Elverperez@att.net Lic #14-00016214</p>	<p>DIRECTOR OF MICROBIOLOGY Pharmaceutical manufacturing and research co. (Sacramento, CA) seeks Director of Microbiology to oversee microbiological testing, quality control, and compliance to ensure that products meet regulatory and safety standards. Direct activities of microbiologists, ensure microbiological testing processes are efficient and compliant with regulatory requirements, and collaborate cross-functionally with R&D, quality assurance, production, and other teams. Maintain the company's commitment to product safety and efficacy. Salary: \$165,000.00 - \$165,500.00. Send resumes to: HRD, Nivagen Pharmaceuticals Inc., 3050 Fite Circle, Suite 100, Sacramento, CA 95827</p>	<p>CREATE YOUR PARADISE</p> <p>Winter Yard Cleanups, Complete Landscape Design/ Installation, Sprinkler System Installs/Repairs, All Types Concrete Work, Fence Installation, Retaining Walls- All Types, Drainage Systems-all types, Landscape Lighting, Residential/ commercial American Landscape Design & Installation, Est 1987 American Construction & Property Maintenance Company</p> <p>WE ACCEPT VISA & MASTER CARD (916)612-0776 Lic#690968</p>	<p>Elk Grove Shell</p> <p>Your Local Full Service Auto Repair Shop Committed to Customer Satisfaction</p> <p>Specializing In:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oil Changes • Smog Repair • Smog Inspection • Safety Inspection • Transmission Service • Brakes • Wheel Alignment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check Engine Light Diagnosis • Tires • Tune-Up • Batteries • 30, 60, 90K Service • Brake & Lamp Station <p>Mon-Fri, 8-5 • 916-685-7796</p> <p>8901 Elk Grove Blvd.</p>	<p>PREMIER ROOFING INC.</p> <p>Se Habla Español LIC# 1097848</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ROOF REPAIR • ROOF MAINTENANCE • COMPLETE RE-ROOF • NEW ROOFS • GUTTER CLEANING <p>CELL 209.810.6233</p> <p>209.745.7565 1premierroofing@gmail.com</p>
<p>3DR CONCRETE</p> <p>All your concrete needs.</p> <p>Bobcat services, driveway repair. Comm. & Res. Lic. # 968987 Insured (209) 570-7304</p>	<p>Landscaping</p> <p>YARD CLEANUP</p> <p>Sod installation Landscape installation Lawnmowing services Fence repair Call for free estimate 916-271-7265</p>	<p>YARD CLEANUP & DECORATIVE ROCK</p> <p>One time cleanup pruning. Also bark, weed control, sod, seed, pruning, sprinkler systems, hauling, etc. Mobile homes, commercial or residential. Local gardener.</p> <p>916-205-9310 or 916-627-9000</p>	<p>Roofing</p> <p>JIM MOYLEN ROOFING</p> <p>1981 License # 407605 A+ Rating with BBB. Specialize in Re-Roof, Prompt Repairs, Low Slope Roof, Seamless Gutter Installation.</p> <p>Free Estimates! Open Monday-Saturday 916-531-2793 Cell Tile Repairs</p>	<p>SACRAMENTO VALLEY ROOFING & GUTTERS INC.</p> <p>RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEW ROOF INSTALL • TEAR OFF & REROOF • ROOF REPAIR • OVERLAY ROOF INSTALL • DRY ROT REPAIR • SEAMLESS GUTTER INSTALL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GUTTER REMOVAL & INSTALL • GUTTER REPAIR & INSTALL • DOWNSPOUTS INSTALL • CUSTOM COLORS <p>FREE ESTIMATES! 916-719-8288</p> <p>RAMON M. FOREMAN/OPERATOR LIC# 1072137</p> <p>WE ARE BONDED AND INSURED</p>
<p>Home Improvement</p> <p>ALL PHASE HOME REPAIR</p> <p>Elk Grove, CA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Electrical •Plumbing •Fencing •Fans •Decks •Doors •Windows •Tile •Flooring •Trim baseboard •Sheetrock •Dry Rot Texture •Painting •Lighting •Concrete •Sprinkler Repair •Framing and more! <p>All phases of home repair & any construction needed- Big or small. Quality work guaranteed! Low prices- free est. Serving Elk Grove, Rancho Murieta, Galt, Wilton, Herald, Sac. & Surrounding Areas</p> <p>CSLB#1134987 Bonded & Insured (916)287-6164</p>	<p>MPG</p> <p>Yard sale? Garage Sale?</p> <p>Advertise in your local community newspaper!</p> <p>Call (916) 773-1111</p>	<p>BRILLIANT LANDSCAPE</p> <p>Artificial Turf Fencing Retaining Wall Concrete Drainage Irrigation Planting Tree Trimming</p> <p>209-251-9387 LIC# 1108441</p>	<p>Painting</p> <p>Shelton Painting, Inc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repaints: Exterior & Interior • Dry Wall Repair <p>Free Estimates (209) 745-7897 3 Generations of Quality Painters #908019</p> <p>We accept Visa & Mastercard</p>	<p>Roofing</p> <p>ROUTT ROOFING</p> <p>Specializing in Res Roofing & Repairs We Hand Nail for Quality! Free Estimates 916-423-1288 or 209-748-5588</p> <p>BBB Since 1975 Lic.#302302</p>
<p>Tractor Work</p> <p>MAC Industries DIRT WORK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Excavations •Utility Trenching •Foundations-All types •Laser Grading & Dozer work •Driveways •Building Pads •Drainage-All Types •Field Mowing / Firebreaks •Flail •Bushhog •Septic System Installation •Drilling •Foundations •Post •Tree holes •Trenching •Irrigation •Drainage •Rototilling •Disking <p>License #919198 & Insured Michael- 916-747-9667 Bill- 916-869-1019</p>				
<p>Services Available</p> <p>Driver with wheelchair accessible van available. Help with shopping or other activities. Call George at 916-470-7169 6am - 10pm</p>				
<p>Advertise in your local community newspaper</p> <p>Call (916) 685-5533</p>				

Visit: mpg8.com

CALL A PROFESSIONAL

PURCHASE • REFINANCE FIXED RATE LOANS

15 Year Term Fixed Rate Loan		30 Year Term Fixed Rate Loan	
RATE	APR	RATE	APR
5.000%	5.30%	5.750%	5.93%
180 Monthly Payments of \$7.91 per \$1,000 Borrowed		360 Monthly Payments of \$5.84 per \$1,000 Borrowed	

Check the El Dorado Advantage:

✓ No Application Fee ✓ No Prepayment Penalty ✓ Local Processing and Servicing



EL DORADO SAVINGS BANK

Serving our local communities for over 65 Years

ELK GROVE • 9003 Elk Grove Blvd. • 916-685-3936

RANCHO MURIETA • 7185 Murieta Drive • 916-354-2661

SHELDON • 8973 Grant Line Road • 916-686-0200

Se Habla Español

Maximum loan \$650,000.00, primary or vacation residence. 20% minimum cash down payment on purchase. 25% equity required on refinance. Other loans available under different terms.

LOAN TERMS SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE

www.eldoradosavingsbank.com 800-874-9779



John Taylor

Farmers Insurance Agent/Broker

14650 Cantova Way, St. 204
Rancho Murieta, CA 95683
jtaylor3@farmersagent.com



**For All Your
Insurance Needs
— In Business
Since 1984**



License #: 0678249

Call today for a policy review and quote!

(916) 485-3236

916-402-6021 (Cell)

Edward Jones

> edwardjones.com | Member SIPC

Compare our CD Rates

Bank-issued, FDIC-insured

6-month	1-year	2-year
4.25 % APY*	4.05 % APY*	3.90 % APY*
Minimum deposit \$10,000	Minimum deposit \$10,000	Minimum deposit \$10,000

Call or visit your local financial advisor today.



Linda Sobon
Financial Advisor

2360 East Bidwell St., Suite 102
Folsom, CA 95630
916-673-6549

* Annual Percentage Yield (APY) effective 10/16/2024. CDs offered by Edward Jones are bank-issued and FDIC-insured up to \$250,000 (principal and interest accrued but not yet paid) per depositor, per insured depository institution, for each account ownership category. Please visit www.fdic.gov or contact your financial advisor for additional information. Subject to availability and price change. CD values are subject to interest rate risk such that when interest rates rise, the prices of CDs can decrease. If CDs are sold prior to maturity, the investor can lose principal value. FDIC insurance does not cover losses in market value. Early withdrawal may not be permitted. Yields quoted are net of all commissions. CDs require the distribution of interest and do not allow interest to compound. CDs offered through Edward Jones are issued by banks and thrifts nationwide. All CDs sold by Edward Jones are registered with the Depository Trust Corp. (DTC).

FDI-1867K-A © 2022 EDWARD D. JONES & CO., L.P. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.



KAREN HOBERG
(916) 947-6910

karen@rmhl.net Lic. #00670687

EXPERIENCE • KNOWLEDGE • RESULTS



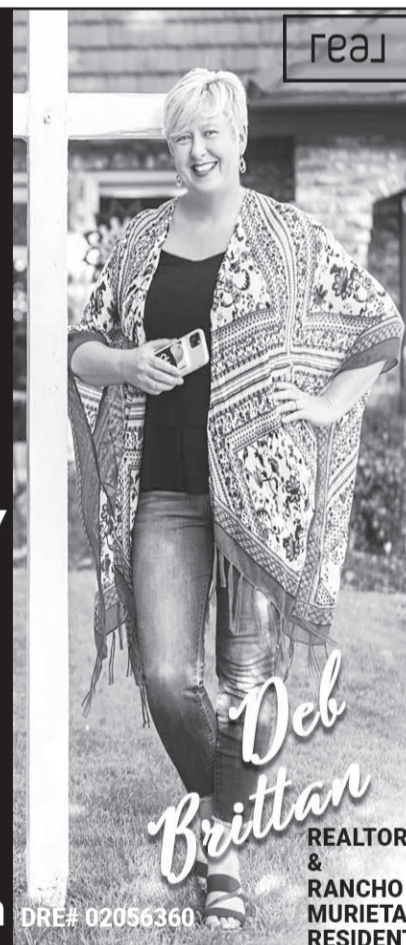
DEB BRITTAN TEAM
unlocking your dreams
IN RANCHO MURIETA

**COMPLIMENTARY
HOME STAGING**

just mention this ad

**(916)
932.6693**

RanchoMurietaHomes.com



REALTOR®
&
RANCHO
MURIETA
RESIDENT

Need to Advertise?

Let Lezet help you get the word out

Office: (209) 745.1551

lezet.vidauri@MPG8.com

Elk Grove Citizen The Galt Herald RIVER VALLEY TIMES

Please call 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. weekdays

RIVER VALLEY TIMES

Serving Rancho Murieta, Sloughhouse
and Sacramento County.

It is the intent of the *River Valley Times* to strive for an objective point of view in the reporting of news and events. It is understood that the opinions expressed on these pages are those of the authors and cartoonists and are not necessarily the opinions of the publisher or our contributors.

The *River Valley Times* is not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts or materials. The entire contents of the *River Valley Times* are copyrighted. Ownership of all advertising created and/or composed by the MPG is with the publishing company and written permission to reproduce the same must be obtained from the publisher.

Subscriptions should be mailed to *River Valley Times*, 2508 Garfield Ave., Suite A, Carmichael, CA 95608.

The *River Valley Times* is published twice monthly. Call (916) 773-1111 for more information.

We are proud members of these newspaper associations.



**Publisher,
Paul V. Scholl**

River Valley Times is a member of **Messenger Publishing Group**

To submit your articles, information, announcements or letters to the editor, please email to:

Publisher@mpg8.com.

Be sure to place in the subject field "Attention to Publisher". If you do not have email access, please call us at (916) 773-1111.

Do You Need **MPG**
Your Legal Ads
Published?

We can help.

Call us now to place your legal advertising!



916-773-1111

All legal ads published by Messenger Publishing Group.

CALL A PROFESSIONAL



AZTEC SOLAR INC.
JACK STANGER
 SOLAR ENERGY EXPERT
Electric • Hot Water • Pool Heating
 (916) 853-2700 • (916) 802-1830
FREE ESTIMATES
 LC# 550110
 jack@aztecsolar.com • www.aztecsolar.com



ANDRADE
 HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING
Residential & Commercial
 Repair • Maintenance • Replacement
Tune Up
Andrade Heating & Air Conditioning
 (916) 747-9882
 License #955437
 "We truly believe honesty is the best policy."
 -AJ & Jen Andrade
 VISA MasterCard American Express



CALL Jessie –
FREE ESTIMATES
BEST PRICE Stump Grinding & Tree Service
 209-210-0625


25 Years Experience!
CRAMER CONCRETE, Inc.
 Driveway • Patio • Walkway • Pool Decks • Concrete Removal
 Stamped • Salt Finish • Exposed Aggregate • Colored • Broom Finish
 Call a trusted Murieta/Wilton Contractor
 References available in your neighborhood
FREE WRITTEN ESTIMATES
Glen Cramer (916) 871-2561
 www.cramerconcrete.com
 BBB Lic# 686244



Quality Service At Competitive Prices!!!
 We currently provide pest protection for over 500 homes in your community!!
Call Today and Compare!
 Be sure and ask about our Murieta Special!!!
916-354-0209
 Rancho Murieta Residents Owned & Operated
 "Particular Homeowners Deserve Apex"



Honor Thy Elders...
 Senior Living Transitions, LLC
 • All Care Facilities
 • Independent Living • Respite
 • In Home Care Providers
 • Companion • VA Aid
 • Medical Alert • Estate Planning
 Gerontology Degree
Caryl Abshire, LNHA
 Over 25 years experience
 www.HonorThyElders.com
916 320-3631



"The Low-rate Leader for Purchase & Refinance Loans"
Bruce Boal 916
 California Home Loans 417-2001
 RM resident over 20 years! NMLS# 1070092




New Home BUILDING SUPPLY (916) 455-3057
 "Since 1949"
 5310 Franklin Blvd. • Sacramento
 • We have all the hard-to-find sidings
 • Quality lumber for any size project
 • Competitive pricing
 • Variety of deck materials
 • Local Steving family owned & operated



Mr. Handyman
 Home Improvement Professionals
 Professional • Safe • Reliable • Fully Insured
 (916) 487-8655
 www.mrhandyman.com/arden-arcade
 SENIOR DISCOUNTS!

We Express Excellence in Auto Repair
 All Insurance Claims Welcome
Auto Body EXPRESSIONS Inc. Written Lifetime Warranty
 I-CAR ASE Direct Repair Network
685-5078
 9734 Dino Dr., Elk Grove
 www.autobodyexpressions.com




PAYROLL and HR Support \$299 a month
 Only available for businesses with up to 10 employees
 We specialize in small and mid-sized businesses. Offering comprehensive and intuitive payroll and HR solutions.
PINNACLE EMPLOYEE SERVICES
 HR | Payroll | Benefits
 DIRECT DEPOSIT
 QUARTERLY TAXES FILING
 PAYROLL TAXES PAY
 ACCRUAL TRACKING
 FILING AND REPORTING
 PAYROLL APP
 HR COMPLIANCE
916-760-7227

Grow your business here!
Call (209) 745-1551 to advertise with us today!
River Valley Times
 Messenger Publishing Group
MPG

Fees to Build New Homes Average \$109,000

BIA Calls on Local Governments to Lower Fees, Improve Affordability

North State Building Industry Association News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)

- Fees builders must pay to local governments in order to build a new home in the Sacramento region now average \$109,000 per home – and a new analysis shows that fees have hit the point where many proposed new home projects may not be built.

The study, conducted by Economic & Planning Systems (EPS) for the North State Building Industry Association, found that the fees charged for homes on standard-sized lots have risen by 25 percent since 2020.

Fees on homes on smaller lots – generally homes that can be profitably sold at lower prices – have risen by 15 percent since 2020 to an average of \$90,000. These rising fees are an important factor in reduced housing affordability, said Tim Murphy, the Building Industry Association's president and CEO.

"High fees mean that only higher-priced homes can be profitably built, which adds to the region's growing housing affordability crisis," Murphy said. "But the study shows that rising fee burdens have reached the point where some projects may not be feasible."

"Housing production in our region is already far below levels needed to meet the need for new housing. Rather than adding to the cost to build, our partners in local



"High fees mean that only higher-priced homes can be profitably built, which adds to the region's growing housing affordability crisis," Murphy said. "But the study shows that rising fee burdens have reached the point where some projects may not be feasible." Photo courtesy Freepik

governments need to carefully evaluate their fees and keep them as low as possible."

The study analyzed a comprehensive set of projects underway in Sacramento, Placer, El Dorado and Yolo counties. The Economic & Planning Systems study found that fees totaling between 15 percent and 20 percent of a home's sale price poses potential feasibility problems, while fees exceeding 20 percent may cause challenges. Fee ranges for six of the 16 higher density projects studied were at or above 20 percent, while two others were reaching that level.

"Homebuilders recognize that

they must pay their fair share for infrastructure needed to accommodate growth," said Clifton Taylor, president of Taylor Builders and the Building Industry Association's 2025 President.

"But the fees many jurisdictions are charging have gotten to the point where many projects simply won't pencil out," Taylor said.

"For our members to continue building the new homes the region needs, this study shows that jurisdictions need to be thoughtful and careful about how they set their fees, and that the total fee burden needs to be evaluated both in

terms of absolute dollar amounts and as a percentage of the finished home value."

Fees for new homes on standard-sized lots average \$125,000 in El Dorado County jurisdictions (up 30 percent from five years ago); \$114,000 in Yolo County communities (up 15 percent), \$109,000 in Sacramento County jurisdictions (up 24 percent); and \$95,000 in Placer County communities (up 17 percent).

Murphy noted that many local jurisdictions do work hard to keep their fees justified and affordable, and some have reduced fees

when studies show their levels were excessive.

"Builders and local officials all recognize that the region is in the middle of a worsening housing crisis that can only be resolved by finding ways to reduce costs and speed the development process to bring the supply of housing more into line with the demand," Murphy said.

Jamie Gomes, managing director at Economic & Planning Systems (EPS), and the lead analyst on the report, said while impact fees are an important tool for local jurisdictions to help fund expanded infrastructure and utilities, the impacts of the fees need to be considered as well.

"Higher than average impact fee burdens are usually only sustainable in higher-income developments or communities, where home prices may be unattainable for many buyers," he said. "High costs and fee burdens eliminate the ability to hit lower home prices that are attainable to broader household income ranges. That's why fees should be carefully evaluated."

Economic & Planning Systems is a land economics consulting firm that provides municipalities, developers and builders with realistic assessments of the feasibility of projects and works with local governments throughout the West in preparing development impact fee nexus studies and impact fee comparisons. ★

Probation Chiefs Elect President and Executive Officers

Chief Probation Officers of California News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - The Chief Probation Officers of California (CPOC) has selected its executive leadership team for 2026, naming Chief Esa Ehmen-Krause of Contra Costa County as President, Chief Izen Locatelli of Mendocino County as Vice President, and Chief Tamika Nelson of San Diego County as Secretary/Treasurer.

"California's probation departments are built on a balance of accountability and opportunity, helping those ready for change while protecting the communities we serve," Chief Ehmen-Krause said.

"It is a privilege to serve alongside the dedicated leaders of this association. I look forward to strengthening partnerships, advancing effective practices and supporting the incredible work happening in counties across the state."

Chief Ehmen-Krause, who has served as Chief Probation Officer in Contra Costa County for the last five years, will



Pictured from left are 2026 CPOC Slate of Officers Chief Tamika Nelson (San Diego), Chief Esa Ehmen-Krause (Contra Costa) and Chief Izen Locatelli (Mendocino). Courtesy photo

guide the association during a period of continued evolution in California's public safety landscape. She brings more than two decades of experience in youth services, community-based interventions and system reform.

Her leadership background includes advancing major reform initiatives as Assistant Chief Probation Officer in Alameda County, as well as earlier

roles within the Indiana Department of Corrections' Division of Youth Services. In Indiana, she earned recognition for implementing the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's Performance-based Standards model and developing strategies to safely reduce youth facility populations.

"Chief Ehmen-Krause is a collaborative, thoughtful, and forward-thinking

leader," said 2025 Chief Probation Officers of California President and San Joaquin County Probation Chief Steve Jackson. "She brings people together to support better outcomes for our communities, an approach that will serve both the association and communities across the state."

The Chief Probation Officers of California (CPOC) is an association of all 58 counties with a shared identity as law enforcement leaders. Chief Probation Officers of California is committed to a research-based approach to public safety that promotes positive behavior change.

Their leadership guides policy and practice in prevention, community-based corrections, secure detention for youth, and direct human services. Chief Probation Officers of California aims to prevent crime and delinquency, reduce recidivism, restore victims, and promote healthy families and communities.

For more information about The Chief Probation Officers of California, go to www.cproc.org. ★

Sierra Health and United Way Launch Match for Meals

Match For Meals News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - As local food banks' resources are stretched thin to serve record numbers of people experiencing food insecurity, Sierra Health Foundation and United Way California Capital Region are launching the Match for Meals campaign.

All donations made through Match for Meals until Jan. 31, 2026, will be matched up to \$300,000 by the two organizations to benefit Sacramento Food Bank and Family Services, Interfaith Food Bank of Amador County, El Dorado County Food Bank, Feeding the Foothills in Placer County and Yolo Food Bank. To donate, visit www.MatchForMeals.org or text Match4Meals to 41444.

Sierra Health Foundation will match donations up to \$200,000, and the local United Way will match donations up to \$100,000.

The announcement was made recently at a press conference at Sacramento Food Bank and Family Services, which supports more than 110 local agencies, including food pantries, community meal sites, senior centers, schools and nonprofits.

On average, nearly 320,000 people rely on Sacramento Food Bank's 200 distribution sites each month. In October, the food bank broke a 49-year record, serving more than 372,000 people.

Across the state in 2024, food banks distributed more than 950 million pounds of food and served more than 6 million people per month, according to the California

Association of Food Banks. Currently one in five Californians – almost 9 million – experience food insecurity.

"When one in five Californians is struggling to put food on the table, we are reminded that hunger isn't just a statistic, it's a reality for our neighbors, our friends and our families," said Dr. Dawnté Early, president and CEO, United Way California Capital Region.

Sierra Health Foundation is a private philanthropy investing in and serving as a catalyst for ideas, partnerships and programs that improve health and quality of life in Northern California and the San Joaquin Valley. Learn more: www.sierrahealth.org.

United Way California Capital Region has been a driving force across the region for more than 100 years, listening, responding and taking comprehensive action to meet local needs. From advancing youth opportunities to strengthening local communities and investing in families' financial security and health, United Way mobilizes communities to build a future where everyone can reach their full potential.

Working across Amador, El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento and Yolo counties, the local United Way provides books and literacy tutoring, addresses housing and food security, leads the region's largest tax preparation initiative, works with foster youth across school districts, launched the region's first guaranteed income program and leads the Community Schools initiative in West Sacramento. Learn more: www.YourLocalUnitedWay.org. ★

CAL FIRE Transitions to New National Emergency Reporting System

CAL FIRE News Release

SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG) - Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) announced recently that fire departments across the state are beginning the transition to the National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS)—a secure, cloud-based platform built to modernize how emergency incidents are reported and analyzed.

Departments across the country are onboarding to NERIS as part of a phased national rollout led by the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), the Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate (DHS S&T), and the Fire Safety Research Institute (FSRI), part of Underwriters Laboratory (UL) Research Institutes. NERIS is replacing the 40-year-old National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS), and will provide local agencies with timely data tools, location-based analytics, and flexible options for incident reporting at no cost to departments.

"Modernizing emergency data collection is a critical step toward strengthening public safety," said Chief Daniel Berlant, California State Fire Marshal. "By utilizing NERIS, we are giving our departments better tools to protect our communities, manage resources effectively, and make informed decisions backed by current data."

The National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS) offers several key features designed to support public fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) agencies. The platform provides zero-cost access

for all public fire and EMS departments, ensuring that every agency can take advantage of its capabilities without financial barriers.

NERIS also prioritizes local data ownership, allowing departments to maintain full control over their records and information. Its GIS-based reporting tools deliver location-specific insights that support better planning and decision-making.

In addition, the system includes actionable dashboards that enhance operational awareness and performance tracking. To make adoption easier, NERIS offers streamlined onboarding, complete with help desk support and training tools.

Departments can begin the onboarding process today by visiting the NERIS website. The process includes account setup, administrator access, and records management system (RMS) integration, if applicable. "NERIS is purpose-built for today's fire service," said Steve Kerber, Executive Director of FSRI. "It's based on research and feedback from the field, and it delivers actionable information that improves emergency response and supports long-term planning and resourcing at the local, state, and national levels."

CAL FIRE – OSFM encourages all departments to complete onboarding as soon as possible to ensure a smooth transition. The current national data platform, NFIRS, will be formally decommissioned on January 1, 2026. For additional questions or technical support, departments can contact the NERIS Help Desk or the CAL FIRE – Office of the State Fire Marshal directly. ★

Tour Visits Six Homes Looking Their Christmas Best

Continued from page 1

“When you walk in, you really feel like you understand the personality of each person,” she added. “Nothing seems staged.”

Finding the homes on the tour couldn't have been easier thanks to the beautifully designed program put together by Janet Nicholson.

The program included maps, photos of each home and heartwarming details she gathered during her visits.

The women's club thanked the volunteers and the homeowners for making the event possible.

The homeowners participating were: Natachia Taylor, on De La Cruz Drive; Deb and Dave Boyd, on De La Cruz Drive; Thersa and Henry Ilaga, on Venado Drive; Wendy Dunn on Rio Blanco; Carol Pato on Leyenda Court, and



Women's club hostess Barbara Simas welcomes visitors to the Natachia Taylor home. Taylor and her mother, Meryl Taylor, created the wreath.

Lesley and John Mahan on Murieta South Parkway.

Vickie Joyner chaired the home tour committee, assisted by Barbara Armstrong, Janet Nicholson, Erin Bailey,

Maria Larson, Laura McAllister and Boots Conway.

See more photos at the-rivervalleytimes.com or on Facebook. ★



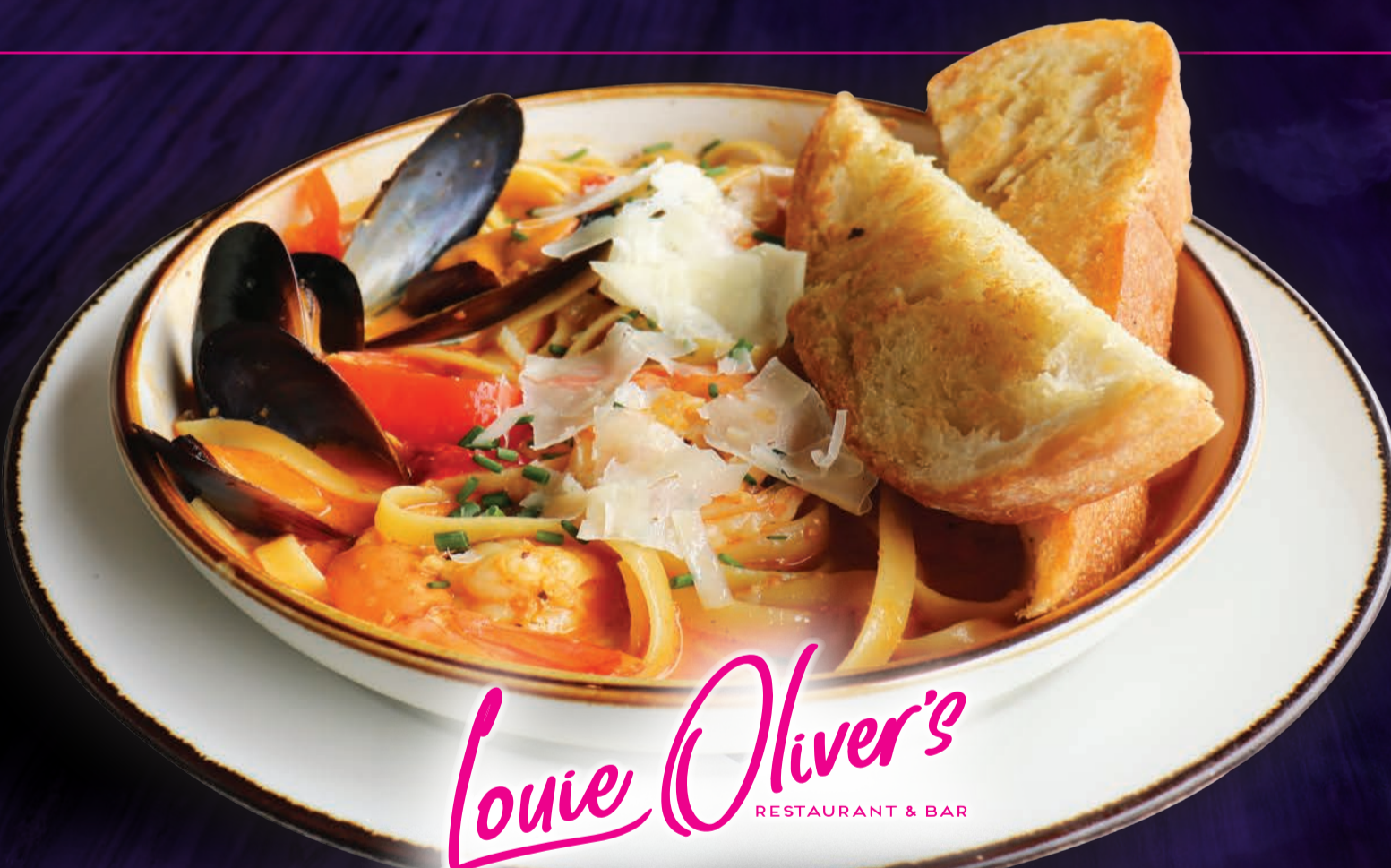
Visitors are dwarfed by the spaciousness of the living room at the home of Deb and Dave Boyd.



Lindsay Sims shows off her great-grandmother's window seat in the home of her mother, Carol Pato.



Theresa Ilaga and her dog Jojo welcome visitors to her home.



Louie Oliver's
RESTAURANT & BAR

SMALL CASINO

BIG FLAVOR

just **30 MIN AWAY**

Harrahs
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA
IONE, CA
4640 COAL MINE RD.



Must be 21 years of age or older to gamble. Know When To Stop Before You Start®. 1-800-GAMBLER (1-800-426-2537). See official rules at Caesars Rewards Center.