

RIVER VALLEY TIMES

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PAGE 3

**RANCHO MURIETA
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PAGE 14

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Wildfire Preparedness Pays Off



Phyllis Banducci and Brenna Howell volunteer at a Wildfire Community Preparedness Day sponsored by the Rancho Murieta Fire Safe Council in 2024. Both spoke at the council's June 2 meeting. File photo by Gail Bullen



Rancho Murieta joins California's Fire Risk Reduction Community List, a designation recognizing communities that undertake wildfire-preparedness activities and planning. The designation becomes effective July 1. Photo courtesy California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection

**By Gail Bullen
River Valley Times Reporter**

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - Rancho Murieta's wildfire-preparedness efforts have earned a new state designation that could help residents secure insurance discounts and strengthen the community's ability to compete for future wildfire-related grant funding.

The Rancho Murieta Regional Fire Safe Council learned June 2 that Rancho Murieta was expected to receive designation as a California Fire Risk Reduction Community, a status subsequently approved by the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection on June 17.

Council members also received

updates on the development of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan and Sacramento County's Wildfire Resilience Plan, reviewed the May 2 Wildfire Community Preparedness Day event, and learned that Rancho Murieta's Cal Fire Forest Health Grant project has been completed. The council held its quarterly meeting via Zoom.

Fire Risk Reduction Community Designation Approved

Registered professional forester Phyllis Banducci told the council she recently learned that Rancho Murieta's application for inclusion on California's Fire Risk Reduction

Continued on page 7

Manganese Alert Lifted; Questions Remain



Rancho Murieta Community Services District's water treatment plant operates near Chesbro Reservoir. District officials issued a precautionary manganese advisory on June 19 and lifted it the following morning after manganese levels returned to normal. Photo courtesy of Rancho Murieta Community Services District

**By Gail Bullen
River Valley Times Reporter**

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - Just two days after Rancho Murieta Community Services District staff told directors that manganese levels in the community's drinking water were within state guidelines, the district issued a precautionary alert advising residents to give infants and babies bottled water because manganese had reached what it described as "EPA maximum contaminant levels."

The June 19 alert, distributed through the district's new SiRcom Smart Alert notification system, stated: "Precautionary Alert: Manganese Levels are at EPA's maximum contaminant levels. Infants and Babies should be given bottled water until further notice."

Less than 13 hours later, at 8:24 a.m. Saturday, the district notified residents that the advisory had been lifted: "Update for Rancho Murieta residents. Manganese levels have returned to normal levels. Water is now ok for consumption."

The rapid reversal has raised questions about what caused the spike, how high manganese levels reached, whether the issue originated at the water treatment plant and what actions district staff took to restore water quality.

A notice later posted on the district website advised residents that it was safe to resume normal water use and promised a detailed explanation on Monday.

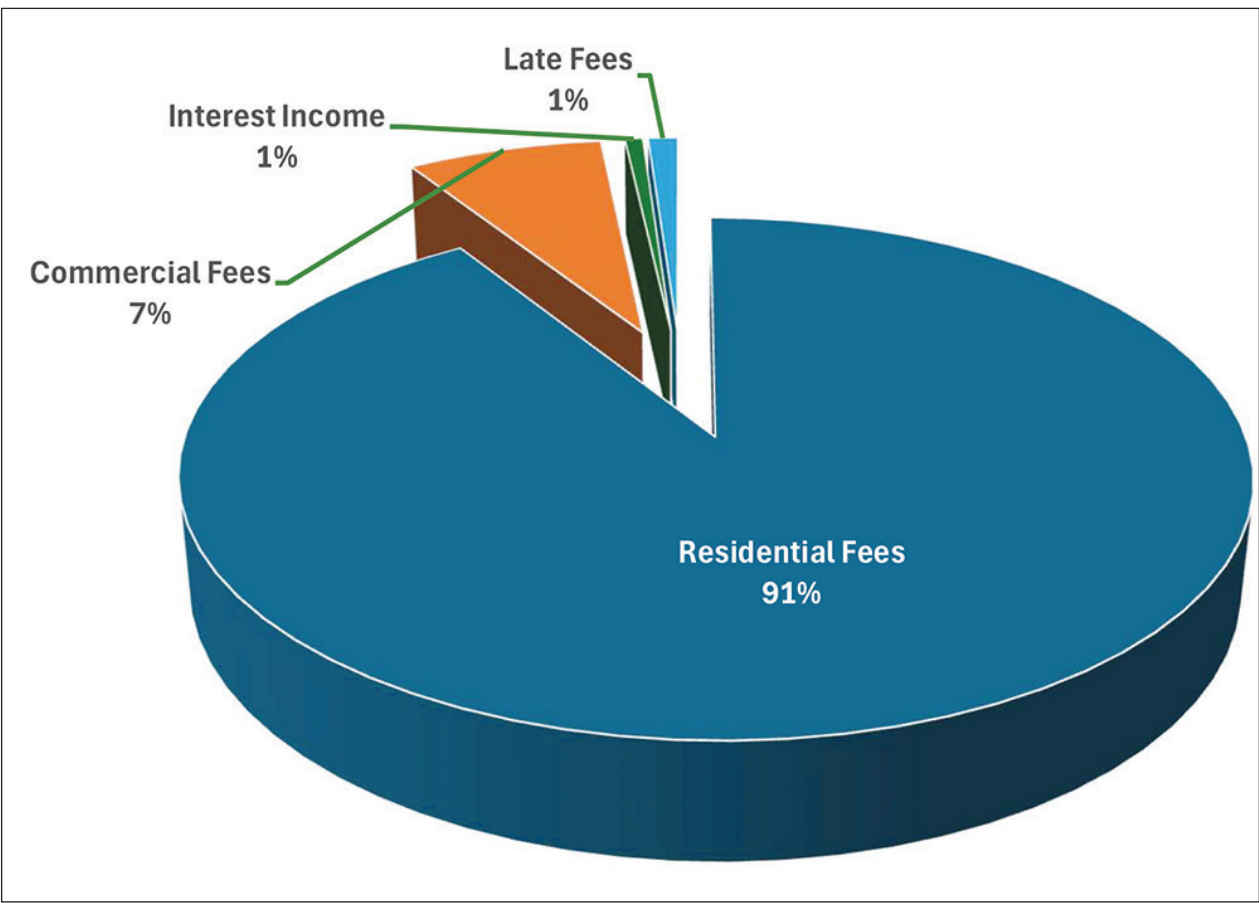
"We plan to post a report with details on what happened Monday," the website stated.

Residents experiencing brown water were advised to flush household lines for 10 minutes and contact the district if the problem persisted.

Because the River Valley Times was going to press on Monday, June 22,

Continued on page 5

CSD Approves Budget, Rate Increases



Residential ratepayers provide \$11.24 million, or 91%, of Rancho Murieta Community Services District's approved \$12.35 million in operating revenue for 2026-27. Commercial customers contribute another \$897,000, or 7%, with interest income and late fees accounting for the remainder. Photo courtesy of Rancho Murieta Community Services District

**By Gail Bullen
River Valley Times Reporter**

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - The Rancho Murieta Community Services District Board approved a 2026-27 budget, a capital improvement program and a series of water, sewer and solid waste rate increases on June 17 despite objections from one resident to the proposed rate hikes and

separate questions from others about the district's long-term water planning priorities.

The budget raises the average customer bill by 31.5%. The board also approved a Capital Improvement Program that includes \$500,000 earmarked for future work on the Urban Water Management Plan. The budget, capital improvement program and related rate ordinance were approved

on a unanimous 3-0 vote.

The increases moved forward after only 25 written protests were submitted during the Proposition 218 process, far short of the majority needed to block them.

President John Merchant and Director Tim Maybee were absent, with Vice President Linda Butler presiding.

Continued on page 5

Water Vision Group Explains Role at CSD Improvements Meeting

By Gail Bullen
River Valley Times
Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG)

- The Rancho Murieta Community Services District Improvements Committee spent nearly an hour on June 10 reviewing the future of the Water Vision Working Group and a newly created matrix intended to organize the district’s growing list of water-related projects and responsibilities.

The discussion was the committee’s first opportunity to review information requested by the board following a contentious May 27 debate over whether the Water Vision Working Group should continue operating as an independent working group or be folded into the Improvements Committee.

The Improvements Committee, chaired by Director Bill Gere, includes Director Randy Jenco, Interim Operations Manager Travis Bohannon, Interim General Manager Amelia Wilder and other district staff. The committee reviews infrastructure issues in depth before making recommendations to the full board.

The committee also received updates on several other matters, including discussions between former director Jim Farrell and consultant Lisa Maddaus regarding unresolved questions in the draft Integrated Water Master Plan, deteriorating culverts at the country club, and other infrastructure projects. Those topics will be covered in two separate stories.

The Water Vision Working Group

currently consists of Jenco, Bohannon, Rancho Murieta Properties Project Manager Jeff Pearson, Rancho Murieta Association General Manager Vicky Lentz and community representative Tom Shewchuk. Wilder regularly participates in meetings but is not formally a member.

The board originally created the group in late 2025 to work with Water Systems Consulting in identifying potential groundwater well sites for Rancho Murieta. Since then, directors have assigned the group additional responsibilities involving Lake Clementia, water-use auditing and Urban Water Management Plan development.

Progress Report on Water Vision Efforts

Shewchuk opened the discussion with a presentation reviewing the group’s progress on its assignments.

He estimated the group’s groundwater work is about 30% complete. Members have evaluated potential well sites and concluded that the most promising locations are not near existing district infrastructure, making transmission costs a significant factor in future development.

Shewchuk said the group continues to support a 2025 Dunn Engineering proposal to conduct geophysical testing to locate groundwater closer to district facilities. The board rejected that proposal on a 3-2 vote in April.

He said questions involving groundwater banking, the number of wells needed, funding sources and negotiations

with landowners remain unresolved.

“We don’t have a well strategy yet,” Shewchuk said.

Shewchuk suggested the district may ultimately need about 1,500 acre-feet of annual groundwater production, although he emphasized that figure represents his personal opinion rather than a board-approved target.

Lake Clementia under Review

Shewchuk estimated the group’s work involving Lake Clementia is only about 10% complete.

He said members are exploring whether the lake could serve as an emergency drinking water source while preserving recreational uses but are waiting to talk to the district’s new water attorney.

According to Shewchuk, representatives from state water agencies indicated that if Rancho Murieta faced a severe drought emergency and needed to use Lake Clementia before all permits were in place, regulators would likely “look the other way.”

“They said, ‘Don’t quote me on it,’” Shewchuk told the committee. “So I’m not quoting anybody.”

Water Audit Challenges Assumptions

Another major assignment involves a districtwide water-use audit and preparation for a future Urban Water Management Plan.

Shewchuk said preliminary results show that older neighborhoods are the district’s heaviest water users while newer homes consume substantially less

water.

“All the new homes are the light water users,” Shewchuk said, attributing the difference to low-flow fixtures, drought-tolerant landscaping requirements and restrictions on turf.

He argued that future water planning shouldn’t assume new homes will consume water at the same rate as older neighborhoods.

“To say that they’re going to use as much water as the houses in the fairways that have these huge lawns is just wrong,” Shewchuk said.

Shewchuk said the audit has uncovered discrepancies involving connection counts, equivalent dwelling units and billing records that still need to be resolved. He suggested that the audit be completed before the district makes major decisions on future water storage needs, including the size of a proposed third water tank.

He also said resolving discrepancies in connection counts is important so the district will know when it has reached the 3,000-service-connection threshold that requires preparation of an Urban Water Management Plan.

Debate over Group’s Future Continues

The discussion eventually returned to the issue that sparked the May 27 board debate.

Gere reiterated his belief that the Water Vision Working Group should operate through the Improvements Committee rather than as a separate working group.

“I think that this should be done as a part of the Improvements

Committee,” Gere said.

Supporters disagreed.

Jenco noted that the board created the group and subsequently assigned it responsibilities beyond groundwater well siting.

Shewchuk argued that all assignments remain unfinished, including groundwater planning, Lake Clementia evaluation, water-use auditing and Urban Water Management Plan preparation.

Pearson defended the group’s continued existence, arguing that it provides expertise the district otherwise might have to purchase from consultants and allows members to work between monthly committee meetings.

“Except for Travis, I know more about how the infrastructure works in this community than anybody,” Pearson said.

Shewchuk challenged the idea that the same work could be accomplished solely through monthly committee meetings.

“Do you want to do that in monthly committee meetings, or do you want to do that in a work group where you can actually meet and make progress?” he asked.

Gere reiterated his position that the work should be carried out through the Improvements Committee.

“I disagree,” Shewchuk replied.

During public comment, developer Bob Keil strongly opposed folding the group into the Improvements Committee. He argued that the Water Vision Working Group was created specifically because complex water issues could not be effectively addressed during monthly committee

meetings and questioned why the district would disband a volunteer group that was making progress on its assignments.

No action was taken regarding the group’s future.

Matrix Intended to Organize Water Projects

Committee members also reviewed a draft matrix prepared by Interim Board Secretary Dyanne Fleet at Wilder’s direction.

The matrix was developed in response to a May 27 board directive seeking a clearer picture of the district’s water-related projects and who is responsible for each task.

Fleet said the effort began after Gere suggested using artificial intelligence as a research tool. She combined AI-assisted research with reviews of board meeting transcripts, staff reports and other historical records.

Fleet said the initial effort produced roughly 30 pages of material, which she condensed into the five-page summary presented to the committee.

“It took me a week,” Fleet said.

Jenco said the matrix needs to be simplified before it becomes a practical management tool. He suggested members of the Water Vision Working Group review the draft because of their familiarity with many of the projects.

The committee agreed that the matrix would return to the Improvements Committee next month for further refinement before going to the board.

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



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

- The Rancho Murieta Women's Club welcomed 129 attendees to its May 27 luncheon at the Rancho Murieta Country Club, drawing the organization's largest crowd since the COVID-19 pandemic outside of its annual fashion show. Members were treated to music, dancing and fellowship as The BlowBacks Band performed hits spanning six decades.

Women's Club President Bonnie Kirschman welcomed attendees and thanked members for their donations to Wellspring Women's Center during the club's March luncheon.

Responding to an audience question, Kirschman explained that the Sacramento nonprofit serves women and children in need by providing meals, child care and other support services. She said club members' donations arrived at a particularly important time and that Wellspring staff members were grateful for the support.

Kirschman also announced Kelly Medrano-Bindel as the club's new historian. Bindel will take over responsibility for maintaining the organization's historical records and operating the club's slideshow presentations.

The president welcomed



Lead vocalist Jenni Roland, center, and members of The BlowBacks Band perform during the Rancho Murieta Women's Club's "Big Band Music Through the Decades" luncheon on May 27 at the Rancho Murieta Country Club.

several new members and reported that the organization has added 23 members since the beginning of the year.

Kirschman also highlighted the success of the club's April blood drive, which collected 63 pints of blood and one plasma donation, and attracted three first-time donors. She thanked donors, volunteers and the Knights of Columbus for helping to make the event a success.

Attention then turned to the club's Sept. 23 fashion show as organizers Erin Bailey and Theresa Ilaga presented a playful preview of the event's Queen of Hearts theme inspired by "Alice in Wonderland."

Wearing decorative fascinators adorned with playing cards and feathers, the pair exchanged

humorous lines about dramatic fashion, outrageous style and a queen with no patience for boring outfits before inviting members to mark their calendars for the annual event.

“Don’t be late for a very important date,” they concluded together.

Kirschman noted that the fashion show is the club’s largest event of the year.

Vice President Toni Anania then announced the club's upcoming July 22 "Denim and Diamonds" evening event, featuring western-themed attire, dancing and entertainment by musician Jerry Lopes.

Anania followed by introducing The BlowBacks Band, describing the group as one of her and Kirschman's favorite bands. All band

members live in Amador
and Calaveras counties.

Lead vocalist Jenni Roland quickly established the tone for the performance.

“We are not a quiet band,” Roland joked before thanking the Women’s Club for the invitation and encouraging attendees to embrace the music.

“The place you go into your head is when you’re 15 years old, and you dance inside your bedroom,” she told the audience. “That’s where you’re going to go today.”

The band opened with "Get Ready" and continued with a crowd-pleasing mix of Motown, classic rock, swing and dance favorites. Songs included "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy," "Some Kind of Wonderful," "Dancing in the Street," "Polka Salad Annie" and Nancy Sinatra's "These Boots Are



Erin Bailey, left, and Theresa Ila preview the Rancho Murieta Women's Club's Sept. 23 fashion show during the May 27 luncheon. Wearing Queen of Hearts-themed fascinators inspired by "Alice in Wonderland," the pair performed a lighthearted skit promoting the event.



Women's Club members take to the dance floor as The BlowBacks Band performs a mix of Motown, classic rock, swing and dance favorites during the May 27 luncheon at the Rancho Murieta Country Club.

Made for Walkin'."

Introducing the latter song, Roland quipped that it was “a classic song for pretty much every woman that was born between 1950 and 2023,” drawing laughter from the audience.

The music soon had members leaving their seats and heading to the dance floor. Others tapped their toes as they sang along to familiar favorites. Throughout the performance, audience members showed their appreciation by filling the band's tips can and enthusiastically applauding the musicians.

After more than an hour of music, Roland asked the audience if they wanted another encore. The response was an enthusiastic yes.

The BlowBacks performed one final number, a spirited rendition of "Land of 1,000 Dances" that incorporated familiar rock 'n' roll favorites and kept members in high spirits until the final note.

Following the concert, members were served a luncheon featuring a spinach salad with dried cranberries, mandarin oranges, toasted almonds and goat cheese, accompanied by a choice of chicken, salmon or Portobello mushroom. Cheesecake was served for dessert.

View more photos at the-
rivervalleytimes.com. ★

A map of the Rancho Murieta area. At the top, a road labeled '50' (Interstate 50) runs horizontally. Below it, a road labeled '16' (State Route 16) runs horizontally. To the left of the '50' road is the label 'Folsom' in large, stylized letters. To the right of the '50' road is the label 'El Dorado Hills' in large, stylized letters. Below the '50' road, there are two green house icons with the text 'FOLSOM RANCH' and 'RUSSEL RANCH' below them. To the right of these is a green house icon with the text 'RANCHO MURIETA' below it. A road labeled 'Bidwell' runs diagonally from the top left towards the center. A road labeled 'Scott' runs vertically from the center towards the bottom. A road labeled 'White Rock' runs diagonally from the top right towards the center. A road labeled 'Latrobe Rd' runs diagonally from the top right towards the bottom. A road labeled 'S Shingle' runs diagonally from the center towards the bottom. A road labeled 'Latrobe' runs diagonally from the center towards the bottom. A road labeled 'Stonehouse' runs diagonally from the center towards the bottom. A road labeled 'Michigan bar' runs diagonally from the center towards the bottom. A road labeled 'Murieta Drive' runs diagonally from the bottom left towards the center. At the bottom of the map is the label 'Rancho Murieta' in large, stylized letters. There are also some small icons: a green house icon near 'FOLSOM RANCH', a green house icon near 'RUSSEL RANCH', and a green house icon near 'RANCHO MURIETA'.

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CSD Improvements Discusses New Culvert Failures

Story and photo by Gail Bullen
River Valley Times Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - With repairs now complete on a failed culvert near the 14th hole on Rancho Murieta Country Club’s north course, Rancho Murieta Community Services District officials have identified four additional drainage failures that will require another round of construction work.

The newly discovered problems, discussed during the June 10 Improvements Committee meeting, include drainage failures at four locations at the golf course.

The committee also reviewed reservoir maintenance activities, infrastructure projects and equipment purchases.

Separate discussions regarding the Water Vision Working Group and the district’s draft Integrated Water Master Plan are covered in separate stories.

Four Repairs to Be Combined

Operations Manager Travis Bohannon said the district is still determining whether the damaged drainage facilities fall within district easements or are the responsibility of the country club.

Field Services Supervisor Cory Carskaddon said the

failures were discovered at South 1 and North 3, North 8 and North 17.

He said three of the drainage lines have collapsed, creating sinkholes, while a fourth has collapsed and is preventing proper drainage.

Carskaddon said the North 3 pipe is root-bound and carries runoff from the De La Cruz area across the fairway and into downstream drainage basins.

Bohannon said he hopes to package all four repairs into a single construction project if the facilities are determined to be district responsibilities.

Bundling the work would allow the district to hire one contractor and avoid multiple mobilization costs, he said.

Interim General Manager Amelia Wilder said locating the original drainage easements has proven difficult because many date back about 40 years. She said she has been working on a blanket drainage easement covering the golf course to simplify future maintenance and repairs.

“In my opinion, drainage is drainage,” Wilder said, arguing for a standing arrangement that would address district drainage facilities wherever they cross golf course property.

Director Randy Jenco agreed, saying that if the facilities are part of the district’s drainage system, responsibility remains with

the district regardless of where the infrastructure is located.

Committee members agreed that once staff determines responsibility and obtains bids, the bundled repair project can proceed directly to the Board of Directors for consideration.

14th Hole Culvert Repair Completed

The discussion came as the committee received an update on the recently completed culvert replacement near the 14th hole on the north golf course. Bohannon reported that the project has been completed, although the district had not yet received final billing.

The 14th-hole project was cited several times during the discussion as an example of drainage infrastructure crossing golf course property.

MEC Culvert Project Set for July

The committee also received an update on the Murieta Equestrian Center culvert replacement project.

According to a staff report, the district received multiple bids and awarded the work to M3 Construction. Construction is scheduled to begin on July 1 and is expected to be completed by July 31.

Lake Harvesting Contract



Utilities Supervisor Corey Carskaddon discusses one of four newly identified drainage failures on the Rancho Murieta Country Club golf course during the June 10 Rancho Murieta Community Services District Improvements Committee meeting.

Recommended

Committee members supported forwarding a three-year aquatic harvesting agreement to the board for approval.

The district annually harvests aquatic vegetation in Lakes Chesbro and Clementia to help maintain water quality and manage plant growth.

The contractor has offered to hold the price at \$15,000 per year for the duration of the three-year agreement. Staff said locking in the current rate would provide cost certainty and assist with long-term budgeting.

Equipment Purchases Advance

The committee also recommended several purchases for board approval.

Among them was the annual renewal of SCADA software licenses used at the district’s water and wastewater treatment

facilities. Rockwell Automation submitted a quote of \$12,251.39 for the licenses.

Staff also requested approval to purchase a replacement recycle pump for the wastewater treatment plant’s east dissolved air flotation unit. Bohannon said the existing pump has been rebuilt multiple times and is nearing the end of its useful life. The replacement cost is estimated at \$9,780.

In addition, the committee supported a master services agreement with Veerkamp Construction that would allow the company to serve as an emergency construction resource for future district projects.

Yellow Bridge Repair Cost Finalized

Bohannon reported that the emergency sewer

main repair completed near the Yellow Bridge has been fully closed out. All invoices have been received, bringing the total project cost to approximately \$107,000.

Watershed Survey Update

The committee also reviewed a proposal to update the district’s watershed sanitary survey, which is required by the State of California every five years.

Staff received two bids and recommended hiring Verdantas Engineering for \$37,990. The update must be completed by December 2026. The committee agreed to forward the recommendation to the board for final approval.

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

Integrated Water Master Plan Issues Discussed at CSD Meeting

Story and photo by Gail Bullen
River Valley Times Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - Nearly two months after the Rancho Murieta Community Services District Board directed resident Jim Farrell to meet with water consultant Lisa Maddaus to review differences between the district’s draft Integrated Water Master Plan and the IWMP Working Group’s findings, Farrell reported that the effort is underway but remains a work in progress.

Farrell, author of a 2025 report reviewing the draft IWMP, delivered his update at the June 10 Improvements Committee meeting.

The committee is chaired by Director Bill Gere and includes Director Randy Jenco, Interim General Manager Amelia Wilder, Interim Operations Manager Travis Bohannon and other staff. The committee reviews infrastructure, engineering and water-related issues before forwarding recommendations to the board.

The draft Integrated Water Master Plan is a long-range planning document that projects Rancho Murieta’s water supplies and demands over the next 20 years and evaluates how the community would fare under various development and drought scenarios. Delivered in October 2024, the draft plan concluded the community would have sufficient water under most circumstances but would face shortages during an extreme drought. The working group and others questioned some of the assumptions that led to the



Resident Jim Farrell, author of a report reviewing the draft Integrated Water Master Plan, discusses his ongoing meetings with IWMP consultant Lisa Maddaus during the Rancho Murieta Community Services District Improvements Committee meeting on June 10.

conclusion.

First Public Update

Although the working group delivered its IWMP report in August 2025, the board didn’t formally follow up on it until April 15. The discussion followed an April 7 Improvements Committee meeting, in which Jenco said that consultant Lisa Maddaus should complete the IWMP, but Gere said he wanted to bring her back to answer outstanding questions.

At the April 15 board meeting, President John Merchant said he could support having Maddaus meet with Farrell to help reconcile differences between the consultant’s draft and the findings of the IWMP work group. Following some discussion, the board voted 3-2 to begin the discussions.

Speaking at the June Improvements Committee, Farrell reported that he and

Maddaus have met twice and exchanged numerous emails and text messages since the board assigned him the task. The first meeting focused on defining the assignment and determining how to produce something useful for the district. A second meeting on May 20 examined concerns raised by the Working Group.

“The way this is framed is that we want her opinion,” he said. “She’s the expert. She is the engineer. She’s the one who has 30 years of experience.”

Farrell said they focused primarily on the water-balance section of the 317-page draft IWMP, the portion prepared by Maddaus. However, she told him she would have to check with Adkins to get answers to some of his questions.

Farrell said Maddaus developed a “very impressive” and “very elaborate”

water-balance model, which generates charts showing how different assumptions and different scenarios affect projected water supplies.

Farrell said the model should be updated with new information, including approximately 300 entitled units, the removal of 136 lots from the proposed Rancho North project, and an updated assessment of Lake Clementia’s capacity.

“She needs to build that into it so we have some good numbers,” he said. “... ‘How short are we?’ Give us a number.”

Farrell cautioned that progress has been slower than expected because Maddaus and her firm are currently assisting multiple agencies with Urban Water Management Plans and other water-planning projects. He also said the district may need to authorize more than \$5,000 to compensate Maddaus for the time required to answer his questions.

During audience comments, Rancho Murieta Properties Project Manager Jeff Pearson asked what the final deliverable would be once Farrell completed his work.

“Are we still going to end up with a draft IWMP?” Pearson asked. “Where does this get us?”

Pearson, who also serves on the Water Vision Working Group, and Jenco both expressed support for using the information to complete the IWMP.

“We need an engineer to stand behind us,” Jenco said. “Otherwise, we open ourselves to all kinds of legal problems.”

Jenco added that the district also needs an engineering analysis, stamped by a licensed engineer,

identifying how much water is needed before proceeding with production wells.

Farrell said the district does not currently need an IWMP. However, state law will require an Urban Water Management Plan once the district reaches 3,000 water connections.

Farrell said that if agreement can be reached on the data and underlying assumptions, he could envision Maddaus using the updated information to “edit the draft into a final form.”

Ultimately, however, Farrell said that decision rests with the board.

Wilder ended the discussion by asking for direction. Gere told her to bring Farrell back for another update at the July 1 Improvements Committee meeting.

Background

The current effort stems from a dispute over the IWMP that has remained unresolved for more than a year.

The district received a 317-page draft IWMP prepared by Maddaus Water Management and Adkins Engineering in October 2024. The study concluded Rancho Murieta would have sufficient water under most circumstances, but it would face shortages during an extreme drought.

Progress on the plan stalled in January 2025, when then-Operations Director Eric Houston advised the district not to finalize the IWMP and instead to focus on preparing an Urban Water Management Plan.

At the board’s March 19, 2025, meeting, Merchant made the motion to create a working group consisting

of himself as the chair, Farrell, longtime community advocate Janis Eckard and Houston to review the draft IWMP. Farrell authored the group’s report, which was presented to the board on Aug. 20, 2025.

While the working group generally accepted the draft plan’s demand projections, it challenged assumptions involving Lake Clementia, recycled water and other future water supplies. The report concluded the district needed additional water sources and recommended further analysis before relying on the draft IWMP for long-term planning.

The following day, Aug. 21, 2025, Houston signed a cancellation of the district’s contract with Maddaus Water Management and Adkins Engineering. The action later became a point of controversy when some directors questioned whether the cancellation should have been brought before the board.

During the following months, the board debated whether to complete the draft IWMP, leave it unfinished or shift its focus to an Urban Water Management Plan. Funding for an Urban Water Management Plan was later included in the 2026-27 Capital Improvement Project list as a placeholder should the board decide to move forward.

Then, on April 15, directors voted 3-2 to direct Farrell to meet with Maddaus and report back on areas of agreement and disagreement related to the draft IWMP.

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

CSD Approves Budget, Rate Increases

Continued from page 1

Resident Questions Rate Increases

Resident Ed Hamzawi said he was surprised more residents had not formally objected to the increases.

“I expected a larger outcry from the community than what you got,” he said.

Hamzawi, who said he spent much of his career working for a public utility, presented comparisons showing Rancho Murieta customers already pay substantially more for water and wastewater service than customers served by other Sacramento-area providers.

“I don’t know of any utility in the Sacramento area that charges rates as high as Rancho Murieta,” he said.

While acknowledging that the district faces legitimate infrastructure and operational needs and has reported developing a new budget to make up for inadequate rate increases over time, he questioned whether such large increases should be implemented all at once.

“These are very significant increases,” Hamzawi said, suggesting the district consider phasing them in over a longer period and seek other funding opportunities.

Finance Director Cecilia Min said the district plans to conduct a comprehensive rate study during the coming year and that completing long-delayed audits should improve its ability to pursue grants and other outside funding opportunities.

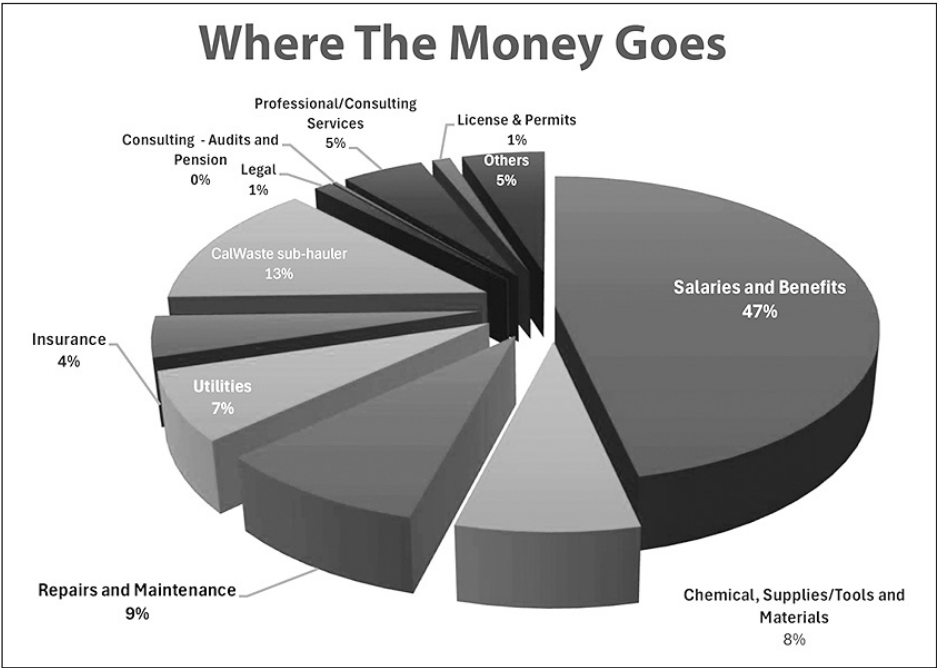
She also noted that many utilities throughout California have adopted significant rate increases in recent years due to rising costs, regulatory requirements and aging infrastructure.

Following the discussion, the board unanimously approved the ordinance increasing water, sewer and solid waste service charges, as well as storm drainage and security assessments.

During director comments, Butler thanked residents for their patience and support during the difficult budget process.

“I want to thank the community for your support, your understanding and your acceptance of this difficult situation, and the need for such dramatic increases,” Butler said. “It’s not easy.”

Butler also thanked Min



Salaries and benefits account for \$5.74 million, or 46%, of Rancho Murieta Community Services District's \$12.35 million operating budget for 2026-27. Other major expenses include Cal-Waste sub-hauler costs (\$1.64 million), repairs and maintenance (\$1.12 million), chemicals and materials (\$937,000), and utilities (\$884,000). Photo courtesy of Rancho Murieta Community Services District

for her work preparing the budget and praised district staff for their efforts to educate residents about the district’s financial challenges and budget process.

Capital Improvement Plan Draws Questions

While Hamzawi focused on the impact of the rate increases, other speakers questioned the district’s capital spending priorities and the absence of funding for several water-supply projects.

Bob Keil, developer of the Residences of Murieta Hills subdivision, questioned why the CIP includes \$500,000 for an Urban Water Management Plan while allocating no funding for preliminary engineering for a third emergency water storage tank, groundwater test wells or Lake Clementia permitting efforts.

Keil said his research indicated Urban Water Management Plans typically cost substantially less than budgeted.

Jenco said the \$500,000 figure was based on a 2025 estimate from Water Systems Consulting. The district remains below the state’s 3,000 service connections threshold that triggers the Urban Water Management Plan requirement.

Min responded that the board did not ask her to include funding for third-tank design work or other water augmentation projects in the CIP. She added that the CIP and budget can be amended later if the board decides to move forward with those projects.

Jeff Pearson of Rancho Murieta Properties echoed Keil’s concerns and argued

that the district continues to spend money studying water issues while failing to advance projects that could increase available supplies.

Pearson noted that more than \$2.7 million remains in a district fund dedicated to future water projects and questioned why none of that money was earmarked for additional well work or other water augmentation efforts.

Water Vision Working Group Debate Continues

The Water Vision Working Group has been the subject of growing debate in recent months, with directors and group members debating its role and future during discussions at the May 27 board meeting and the June 10 Improvements Committee meeting.

Former CSD Board President Steve Booth criticized the working group in unusually blunt terms, arguing that its primary purpose is to support future development.

“The developer slant of that group is obvious,” Booth said. “Any claim to the contrary is simply incredulous.”

Booth specifically cited the participation of Director Randy Jenco, Water Vision Working Group member Tom Shewchuk and Rancho Murieta Properties representative Jeff Pearson, contending the group’s efforts are focused on securing additional water supplies for future growth.

“Let’s just call it what it is,” Booth said. “It’s a group attempting to find more water to support more development.”

Shewchuk rejected Booth’s characterization and instead asked Butler and Merchant to publicly discuss the group’s charter and accomplishments following recent reviews at the Improvements Committee.

Butler declined, saying public comments were not the appropriate forum for that discussion.

Director Bill Gere has suggested folding the group’s work into the Improvements Committee, while its members argue the working group has helped move complex water issues forward more quickly.

Pearson defended the group’s efforts and argued the district has spent decades acknowledging the need for additional water supplies without making meaningful progress.

“For more than three decades, this district has been specifically obligated to increase the raw water supply available for build-out and the community,” Pearson said.

Citing agreements dating back to 1986, Pearson said the district has repeatedly committed to finding additional water supplies and developing a second water source.

He said agreements in 1986, 1991, 1995, 2012 and 2016 all contemplated additional water supplies, yet “the net result of this vitally important raw water available to the community is zero.”

Pearson said that history is one reason he supports the Water Vision Working Group’s efforts to explore groundwater development, Lake Clementia permitting and other options.

He expressed frustration



Resident Ed Hamzawi protests the CSD rate increase, saying that Rancho Murieta residents will pay as much as three times more for water and sewer than anyone else in the county. Photo by Gail Bullen



Steve Booth, a former board president, argues that the sole purpose of the Water Vision Working Group is to find water for development. Photo by Gail Bullen

that discussions continue to focus on obstacles rather than solutions.

“All we hear is what we can’t do,” Pearson said.

Pearson said he does not intend to drop the issue.

“I’m not going away,” he told the board. “Every chance I get, I’m going to show you how we can do this versus why we can’t.”

Other Business

In other business, the board approved a contract for the required update to the Cosumnes River Watershed Sanitary Survey.

Interim General Manager Amelia Wilder reported that four board seats will be up for election in November and encouraged interested residents to consider running. She also said interviews for the district’s permanent general manager position are expected to begin in July, with hopes of filling the position later this summer.

Operations Director Travis Bohannon reported that the district completed

its annual diversion season from the Cosumnes River on May 31, leaving the Clementia, Chesbro and Calero Reservoirs full heading into summer.

Bohannon also reported that the district’s 2025 Consumer Confidence Report has been completed and posted online, noting there were no major drinking water violations during the year.

In addition, he said the State Water Resources Control Board recently adopted new maximum contaminant levels for manganese, a naturally occurring mineral that can accumulate in Rancho Murieta reservoirs during the summer months. Bohannon said the district remains within the new standards and already tests for manganese monthly, but will now be required to report treated-water manganese levels quarterly.

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

Manganese Alert Lifted; Questions Remain

Continued from page 1

questions were emailed to district officials on Sunday, June 21, seeking details about the incident. A response was not received before publication.

Among the questions posed were what manganese level triggered the advisory, where the sample was collected, whether the result came from laboratory testing or in-house monitoring, what caused the apparent spike, and what test result allowed the district to lift the warning less than a day later.

The district has indicated that additional information will be released on Monday, June 22. Once that information becomes available, the River Valley Times will post an updated story online at rivervalleytimes.com.

Board Discussion Preceded Alert

The advisory came shortly after Interim Director of Operations Travis Bohannon discussed new state manganese reporting requirements during the June 17 board meeting.

Bohannon told directors that the State Water Resources Control Board had recently issued new manganese reporting requirements that took effect June 1. He

said the district already conducts manganese testing monthly, exceeding the state’s quarterly reporting requirement, and indicated the district’s treated water remained within applicable guidelines.

Bohannon explained that manganese occurs naturally in Rancho Murieta’s reservoirs during the summer.

What Is Manganese?

Manganese is a naturally occurring mineral commonly found in both surface water and groundwater. According to the California State Water Resources Control Board, manganese is an essential nutrient, but elevated concentrations can pose health concerns, particularly for formula-fed infants and young children, who absorb and retain manganese more readily than adults.

On June 2, the state’s Division of Drinking Water revised health-based notification and response levels for manganese after reviewing scientific studies that found potential developmental and neurological impacts from prolonged exposure to elevated manganese levels, especially in formula-fed infants.

State officials describe manganese as both an aesthetic and a health issue. At

lower concentrations, it can cause discolored water, staining of plumbing fixtures and laundry, and sediment buildup. At higher concentrations, prolonged exposure may pose health risks to sensitive populations.

The district has not yet disclosed the manganese concentration that triggered the June 19 advisory, making it impossible to determine whether the exceedance involved California’s secondary drinking water standard, a health-based notification level or another threshold.

Familiar Challenge for Rancho Murieta

Manganese has been a recurring issue for Rancho Murieta’s water system.

In 2019, the district experienced a significant yellow-water event that generated approximately 80 customer complaints. District documents from that period identified dissolved manganese as the cause of the discoloration.

At the time, district officials reported that Water Treatment Plant No. 2 was successfully removing manganese from the water supply, while Water Treatment Plant No. 1 was temporarily taken offline because it was unable to reduce

manganese concentrations to acceptable levels.

District reports indicated that manganese levels tend to increase during warmer weather, requiring treatment adjustments and additional monitoring.

The district eventually resolved the 2019 incident through operational changes, treatment modifications and extensive flushing of the water distribution system.

Awaiting Answers

For now, residents know only that manganese levels rose high enough Friday evening to prompt a bottled-water recommendation for infants and babies and that subsequent testing allowed the district to lift the advisory Saturday morning.

What remains unclear is whether the elevated manganese level was detected in raw water, treated water or the distribution system; whether the result represented a short-term spike or a broader treatment issue; and whether the recently revised state manganese notification requirements played any role in triggering the advisory.

The district has promised a detailed explanation on Monday, June 22. Until then, many of the key questions surrounding the brief advisory remain unanswered.

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

Resident Raises Concerns About Transparency, Community Involvement at RMA Board Meeting

Story and photo by Gail Bullen
River Valley Times Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - Questions about transparency, communication and member participation surfaced during public comment at the June 16 Rancho Murieta Association Board meeting, where resident Tom Shewchuk said several recent board actions have created a perception that community involvement is becoming less important in association governance.

Speaking during the meeting's public comment period, Shewchuk said a series of recent decisions has reduced opportunities for members to participate in board discussions and stay informed about issues before the board.

"It seems over the course of the last, call it four to six to eight months, that this board has been making decisions or policies or changes that are reducing the amount of community involvement and interest in attending the board meeting," Shewchuk said.

He pointed to three examples: the elimination of the Communications Committee, a change in public-comment procedures that no longer allows residents to speak on agenda items during board discussion, and difficulties obtaining information contained in board meeting packets.

Shewchuk noted that only a handful of people were present in the audience and suggested declining attendance may reflect growing

disengagement among members.

"The perception that one might get is that this board is happy working with the board and staff without community input and community involvement," he said. "Call it just a perception based on decisions that have been made."

Access to Board Packets

The third issue raised by Shewchuk involved access to board meeting packets.

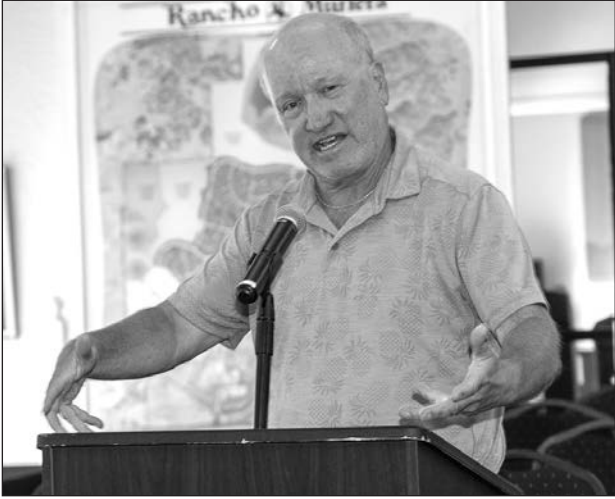
During public comments at the May 19 board meeting, the River Valley Times reported that it had requested a copy of the member packet but did not receive one. Resident Jim Moore also told the newspaper before the meeting that he had unsuccessfully requested a member packet.

Shewchuk told the board on June 16 that without access to packet materials, members may have difficulty understanding issues before they come before directors.

"So, how do members even know what's going to be discussed?" Shewchuk asked. "And just looking at the agenda, it's hard to see."

Following the June 16 meeting, the River Valley Times learned that a member packet had been made available in a notebook at the association office and that Shewchuk had received a copy after requesting it.

Under past association practice, residents who requested a member packet received a redacted version of the board packet, with information involving resident privacy – such



Resident Tom Shewchuk speaks during the June 16 Rancho Murieta Association Board meeting, saying several recent board actions have reduced opportunities for community involvement and public participation

as Compliance Committee and Architectural Review Committee matters – removed before distribution.

However, in a text message exchange with the newspaper, Shewchuk said the packet he received consisted of only 17 pages, while the full board packet was 143 pages. He noted that supporting materials for several agenda items, including volleyball court design plans and gazebo ramp details, were not included in the member packet he received.

The River Valley Times independently confirmed that the proposed scooter rule discussed by directors was not included in the member packet. The agenda referenced supporting material elsewhere in the board packet, but that material was not part of the packet available to members.

The newspaper subsequently emailed General Manager Vicky Lentz on June 17, requesting a copy of the member packet and left a voicemail on June

18, but did not receive a response before press time.

Public Comment Policy Shewchuk also criticized the board's decision to revise public-comment procedures, which it put into place in September 2025.

Under the current format, residents may speak only during a single open-forum period at the beginning of each meeting. The previous practice of allowing comments on individual agenda items after board discussion and before a vote was eliminated. As a result, residents must now make their comments before hearing the board's deliberations.

When asked about the change after it was implemented, Board President Patrick O'Hern said the policy was intended to keep meetings orderly and prevent a small number of speakers from monopolizing discussions. He and Director Scott Adams said the association had researched the issue and believed the revised procedures complied with

the Davis-Stirling Act governing homeowners associations.

At the June 16 meeting, Shewchuk argued that the change reduced opportunities for meaningful public participation.

As an example, he cited the board's May review of conceptual plans for the South Gate renovation project.

"It would have been great if all that data had been out in public, if people could have come with their inputs at the meeting," Shewchuk said.

He said he would have expressed concerns about a proposed water feature because it could send the wrong message while Rancho Murieta continues to discuss long-term water-supply challenges.

Question About the Process

After the meeting, the River Valley Times contacted O'Hern regarding a question that had not been explored when the public-comment policy was first reported in January: why a longstanding meeting practice affecting member participation was changed without a public board discussion explaining the reasons for the change before it was implemented.

O'Hern, who was absent from the June 16 meeting due to a family emergency, said he had not yet had an opportunity to research the issue but indicated he may address the issue at a future board meeting.

"What I'll do is I'll do some research on that, and I might comment on that next meeting," O'Hern said. "I can't say anything right now."

He added that the board does not make such decisions casually and typically seeks guidance from legal counsel before implementing procedural changes.

"We don't just do these

things," O'Hern said. "We get input from our legal counsel."

Communications Committee

The final example cited by Shewchuk was the board's December decision to eliminate the Communications Committee following the resignation of Director Danny Carrillo.

At the time, O'Hern said the committee had largely fulfilled its original purpose of assisting with the transition to Greenfield Communications and that much of its work was being handled by staff. Administrative Assistant Matt Matisse had assumed responsibility for many communication functions, including e-blasts and written materials distributed to residents.

During the December discussion, Shewchuk urged the board not to lose what he described as a valuable "brain trust" of resident volunteers who had contributed ideas and feedback through the committee.

"I attended three or four of those meetings, and there's a lot of good input from that team," Shewchuk said at the time.

He said he believed the group continued to provide useful input even if its role had evolved beyond its original charter.

Whether the concerns raised by Shewchuk represent a broader sentiment among association members remains unclear. However, his comments highlighted an ongoing debate over how much resident participation should be incorporated into board deliberations and how best to keep members informed about decisions affecting the community.

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

RMA Board Reviews Security, Scooter Rule, July 4 Plans

Story and photo by Gail Bullen, River Valley Times Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - A myriad of topics were discussed during the June 16 Rancho Murieta Association Board meeting, including the future of security services in Rancho Murieta, Fourth of July plans, a proposed stand-up motorized scooter rule, a ramp for the North Gazebo and a new volleyball court at Clementia Park.

The meeting also included public comments from resident Tom Shewchuk, who questioned whether recent board actions have reduced opportunities for community involvement. His comments touched on changes to public-comment procedures, elimination of the Communications Committee and public access to board meeting packets.

That issue will be explored in a separate River Valley Times story.

Security Discussions Continue

Although the reactivated Security Ad Hoc Committee did not meet, Chairman Chris Childs provided an update on a June 11 meeting with Rancho Murieta Community Services District officials to discuss the future of security services.

Participants included Childs, RMA President Patrick O'Hern, RMA General Manager Vicky Lentz, CSD President John Merchant and Interim CSD General Manager Amelia Wilder.



Director Chris Childs updates fellow Rancho Murieta Association directors on June 16 about discussions with the Rancho Murieta Community Services District on the possibility of the association taking over security services inside the gates.

Childs said his primary question was what role CSD envisions for security if the association were to assume responsibility for services inside the gates. According to Childs, Merchant said the district would prefer to focus on providing water and sewer services and eventually leave the security business entirely, both inside and outside the gates.

Childs also said Merchant indicated he does not believe the district wants to continue collecting Measure J security assessments inside the gates or south of Highway 16, although Merchant emphasized that he represents only one vote on the five-member board.

Saying it was important for residents to understand the views expressed at the meeting, Childs said the committee will continue researching alternatives and plans to present multiple options to the board.

"I informed CSD that the last option would be to do nothing, to leave this as a security function for CSD," he said.

Childs said district

officials confirmed that security services were included in the 2026-27 budget and are expected to continue through the upcoming fiscal year. He added that committee members are preparing to "dig in even deeper" on the issue than they did during earlier discussions about the future of security services.

Fourth of July Plans

Recreation Committee Chairman John Haviland reviewed plans for the community's Fourth of July celebration, including the annual Kiwanis pancake breakfast, fun run, parade, music and fireworks.

Haviland urged residents to obtain visitor passes in advance to reduce delays at the gates and announced that confetti cannons will not be permitted in this year's parade after cleanup crews spent months removing confetti from last year's event.

To mark the nation's 250th anniversary, the fireworks show will feature a special opening sequence, and a patriotic display

with Betsy Ross flags and a large American flag will be installed along Laguna Joaquin across from the RMA building.

Haviland reported that the Summerfest committee is planning a new July 3 event at Stonehouse Park as part of the community's celebration of the nation's 250th anniversary. The event, scheduled from 4 to 11 p.m., will feature bounce houses, DJs, food trucks, wine and dancing, along with other entertainment for residents and visitors.

Scooter Rule Delayed

The board continued discussing a proposed rule governing stand-up motorized scooters within Rancho Murieta.

Director Scott Adams said the proposal had been circulated to residents for review and generated eight responses. Four supported the rule as written, two comments were unrelated to the proposal, and two questioned the age restrictions.

Adams recommended removing a section that would have established enhanced fines for egregious violations. He said the provision had been modeled after e-bike rules adopted after problems with dangerous riding behavior but that similar issues have not developed with stand-up scooters.

Adams also asked the board to discuss whether operators should be required to possess a driver's license or instruction permit and whether helmet use should be mandatory for all riders.

Adams said he favors a helmet requirement but wants additional research on age-related restrictions before the board adopts the rule.

The board voted to remove the proposed fine schedule and continue discussion of the remaining issues at its July meeting.

Gazebo Ramp Requested

During public comments, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post member Dave Walters asked the board to install an accessible ramp at the North Gazebo, where veterans' events are held throughout the year.

"We're carrying quite a few vets up the stairs," Walters told the board. "It's time to actually put a ramp up there."

Later in the meeting, Maintenance Supervisor Troy Schaffner presented a conceptual plan for a permanent concrete-and-steel ramp with handrails. He said the project would likely cost less than \$2,000 because maintenance staff could perform most of the work in-house. He said the Maintenance Committee supported the project,

However, because it was not specifically listed as a board action item on the agenda, directors agreed to place formal consideration of the ramp and a request for a VFW plaque on the July agenda.

Volleyball Court Approved

The board approved the installation of a grass volleyball court at Clementia Park.

The proposed court will use removable posts and

painted boundary lines so that the area can continue to serve other community purposes. Materials are expected to cost about \$500 and will be funded through the maintenance department budget.

Resident Tom Shewchuk offered to connect staff with former collegiate volleyball players living in the community who could provide advice on court dimensions and setup.

Other Business

General Manager Vicky Lentz reported that repairs to the North Gate continue following the May 17 crash, which severely damaged the entrance structure.

She said the association is continuing to work with its insurance carrier and that an engineer was scheduled to inspect the site on June 17. Repair proposals are expected shortly afterward.

Architectural Review Committee Chairman Ernie Cowles reported that staff approved 19 architectural projects in May, bringing the total approved in 2026 to 101.

Compliance Committee Chairman Tom Reimers reported that the committee reviewed 15 appeals during its June meeting and continues to discuss the relocation of motorcycle parking near the North Gate. He also reported that the Community Services District issued 20 citations in March, while RMA issued 193.

The board's next regular meeting is scheduled for July 21.

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

Wildfire Preparedness Pays Off

Continued from page 1

Community List had been approved pending final action by the Board of Forestry.

Banducci said she became aware of the program after a Rancho Murieta homeowner asked whether the community was included on the state list. After researching the designation, she learned that applications must be submitted through a public agency with defined boundaries. Working with Rancho Murieta Community Services District Interim General Manager Amelia Wilder, Banducci completed the application on the district's behalf.

"I did not know that existed," Banducci said.

Banducci told the council she expected the Board of Forestry to approve the designation at its June 17 meeting. In a June 19 email to the River Valley Times, she confirmed that the board approved the 2026 Fire Risk Reduction Community List and that Rancho Murieta was included through the Rancho Murieta Community Services District. The designation becomes effective July 1 when the state posts the updated list.

"It'll give us more of an insurance discount, or another box to check for those people who have trouble with their insurance, just like Firewise does for us," Banducci said. "It's not a huge

discount, but it's a little bit, so every little bit helps."

Banducci said the designation also recognizes that "our community is engaged, that we're more resilient."

Summing up the effort, she added, "Here we go with another feather in our cap."

Banducci said she plans to work with both the Rancho Murieta Association and Community Services District to publicize the designation and make documentation available to residents seeking insurance discounts.

RMA Maintenance Director Troy Schaffner thanked Banducci for pursuing the designation and said the association would help publicize it through its communication channels.

Community Wildfire Protection Plan Takes Shape

The council also received an update on the development of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan, commonly known as a CWPP.

The effort is being led by Brenna Howell, Fire Safe Council coordinator for the Sacramento County Office of Emergency Services. Howell said she has asked Banducci to assist in developing the plan, drawing on her experience overseeing Rancho Murieta's recently completed Cal Fire Forest Health Grant project.

"I've just asked Phyllis

to come on and help me with completing the community wildfire protection plans," Howell said.

Howell said completion of the CWPP will require a series of public outreach meetings before the plan can be reviewed and approved by Cal Fire.

"We're going to try to get the CWPP done before the end of 2026. That's a goal that we have," Howell said.

Howell described the CWPP as one of her top priorities because it will serve as the Fire Safe Council's roadmap for future projects and funding opportunities.

Banducci said the plan will help identify wildfire-preparedness priorities before grant opportunities arise.

"If you're going to get grant funding, you have to identify all these items. We can't just take a shotgun approach," Banducci said.

She said potential priorities could include home-hardening projects, hazardous tree work, vegetation management and other wildfire-mitigation efforts.

Howell and Banducci also reported they are working on maps and other technical materials required for the plan, including a review of the Fire Safe Council's planning boundaries.

Wildfire Resilience Plan Update

Council members also

discussed Sacramento County's Wildfire Resilience Plan, an effort to improve evacuation routes and address infrastructure vulnerabilities along Jackson Highway that were exposed by recent wildfires and the New Year's flooding of 2023. Members noted that public meetings on the project were slated for June 24 and 25, and said they will continue to follow the study as additional analysis is completed.

The Fire Safe Council was instrumental in helping secure funding for the project and continues to advocate for improvements that would strengthen emergency access and evacuation capabilities for Rancho Murieta and surrounding communities.

Preparedness Day Lessons Learned

Council members also reviewed the May 2 Wildfire Community Preparedness Day held in the Tractor Supply parking lot in Rancho Murieta.

Howell said participating organizations included Cal Fire, Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District, Rancho Murieta Association staff, and the Fire Safe Council. "We had a good support system from partnering agencies," Howell said.

She estimated attendance at approximately 70 people and said organizers had hoped to attract a broader South County audience.

One lesson learned, Howell said, was that many Rancho Murieta families were attending youth sporting events at Stonehouse Park the same day.

"Everybody was up at the ball fields at Stone House Park, and we could have probably seen a thousand people that day," she said.

As a result, Howell suggested moving the event back inside the gates next year, where previous preparedness events have drawn larger crowds.

Council member Don Kurtz, who volunteered at the event with his wife Genevieve, said they "had a very good time" and felt the event was "absolutely worth the effort."

Karen Hoberg said the Tractor Supply location worked well from a logistics standpoint because participating organizations were located close together but agreed attendance had been stronger at events held inside Rancho Murieta.

The council generally supported exploring a return to an in-community location for next year's event.

Cal Fire Grant Completed

Banducci reported that the \$4.5 million Cal Fire Forest Health Grant project is now officially complete.

"I think I closed it out last time, but the Cal Fire Forest Health Grant is done," she said. "I sent off all my final paperwork in March."

The grant funded fuel-reduction work on 950

acres of woodlands in and around Rancho Murieta to reduce wildfire risk and improve forest health.

Discussion then turned to long-term maintenance of areas treated under the Cal Fire Grant. While Banducci said the fuel-reduction work has left the community in good shape for now, she expects maintenance will be needed within the next few years as vegetation regrows and oak trees continue to die naturally.

"I definitely think in the next couple of years we will need some maintenance," Banducci said. "We do lose, I say, three to five oak trees a year, so we just need another year or two, and we will have maintenance."

Council members discussed potential funding sources for that future work, including watershed-related grants and assistance programs. Banducci said the environmental review completed for the original project should help streamline future maintenance efforts within the treated areas.

Council members expressed hope that Rancho Murieta's new Fire Risk Reduction Community designation, continued Firewise participation and eventual completion of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan will strengthen the community's ability to compete for future wildfire-preparedness funding.

This story is at therivervalleytimes.com and on Facebook.





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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Summerfest Plans July 3 Celebration

Summerfest will host a community celebration from 4 to 11 p.m. July 3 at Stonehouse Park. The event will feature a popular DJ, bounce houses, a bar, line dancing and a water balloon contest for children at 6 p.m. Food will be available from three food trucks: Bangin Churro Bros, Hefty Gyros and Wildfire Pizza.

Because of the July 3 event, Summerfest has canceled the food truck gathering previously scheduled for Sunday, July 5 at Stonehouse Park.

Kiwanis Sells Tickets for Pancake Breakfast July 4

Start your Fourth of July festivities at the Kiwanis Fourth of July Pancake Breakfast from 7 to 9:30 a.m. July 4 at Stonehouse Park. The delicious breakfast includes pancakes, (with optional

blueberries) sausages, eggs, juice, water and coffee.

Ticket prices are: \$6 for adults and children 6 and up; children 5 and under eat free. Ticket prices on July 4 are \$9 for adults and children 6 and up; children 5 and under free. Tickets can be purchased online at rmkiwanis.org or at the RMA Building during regular business hours, cash or check only. There are no online sales on July 4.

Fun Run Slated for July 4 Celebration

The 46th Annual Fourth of July Fun Run is open to all: runners, joggers, dog walkers, and stroller pushers are welcome. The main course is just under three miles, with a shorter option available for walkers.

Erin Bailey of the Murieta Health Club is once again sponsoring the event. The adult race

begins at 7:30 a.m. at the Gazebo on the North. A children's run for ages 10 and under starts at 8:15 a.m. at the park across from the Gazebo.

For more information, contact John McNamee at 916-206-3246.

Women's Club Plans 'Ladies' Nite Out'

Dust off your boots and don your denim and diamonds for an evening of country music and line dancing when the Rancho Murieta Women's Club presents "Ladies' Nite Out" on July 22. Doors open at 5:30 p.m., with entertainment by singer and local favorite Jerry Lopes beginning at 6 p.m.

A taco bar buffet also is planned. The cost is \$35 for members and nonmembers. Reservations are required by July 10.

For more information, contact

Barbara Armstrong at 916-541-1884 or Laura McAllister at 805-404-7975.

CSD Announces Openings on Four Board Seats

Rancho Murieta residents will elect four directors to the Rancho Murieta Community Services District Board in November. Residents interested in serving their community are encouraged to run for office.

The candidate filing period opens July 13 and closes Aug. 7.

Nomination papers are available from the Sacramento County Voter Registration and Elections Office, 7000 65th St., Suite A, Sacramento.

Additional information is available from the Sacramento County Voter Registration and Elections Office website.

RMCC Plans Car & Art Show July 25

The Rancho Murieta Country Club will host a Car & Art Show on July 25 featuring collector vehicles, local artists, live music and dining. The event begins with no-host cocktails, a car show and an art walk on the 18th Fairway from 3 to 5 p.m. A barbecue buffet dinner will be served at 6 p.m., followed by a performance by the Engine 4 Band on the Terrace Patio at 7 p.m.

The buffet dinner and concert package is \$30. Concert-only admission is \$5 for club members and \$25 for nonmembers. Vehicle and artist/crafter entries are \$10.

For more information, contact club.office@ranchomurieta.com or call 916-354-3416. Vendors may call 916-354-3421.

★

MEMORIAL

TONI MAYER — 01/09/1946 - 05/03/2026

Toni was a resident of Rancho Murieta for 31 years.

She is survived by her husband, Stephen Mayer, son Scott Mayer of Concord, CA, daughter Nichole Mayer of Roseville Ca, and her sister and husband Susan and Robert Salutric of Saratoga Ca.

Toni was 80 years old and passed away peacefully on May 3, 2026 at the Cogir Memory Care facility in Folsom Ca. She was born on January 9, 1946 in Chicago Ill. to parents Mildred and Frank Di Santo, where she spent her early years until in her early 20's, she moved to southern California beginning a banking career with First Interstate Bank until retiring in 1994. In 1985 she and Stephen where married while living in San Jose,



Ca., before moving to rural Railroad Flat in the historic gold country. They were both active in their local volunteer fire department where they both earned EMT certifications. Toni later got a position as a laboratory assistant at Mark Twain hospital. In 1995 they moved to Rancho Murieta

where, Toni was active in her new community becoming a charter member of the River Valley Garden Club. She was active in many community activities such as book clubs, bunco, and pickleball. Toni always loved nature. She delighted in seeing deer parading behind her fenced yard. The wild turkeys were always her favorite. She loved feeding all the backyard birds. She was also a docent at the Sacramento Zoo. Toni loved life and her witty sense of humor was enjoyed by all that knew her. A Celebration of Life will be held for her on, June 27 th at 1:00pm, at the RM Association Building on Murieta Parkway. All are invited to attend.

Donation's to the Alzheimer's Assoc in Toni's name would be greatly appreciated.

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Closed 12:00 Noon – 7:00 PM. Gates open at 7:00 PM. Come early to avoid long lines. Concert starts promptly at 8:30. No Refunds – No Exchanges.

Events open to Rancho Murieta residents, real property owners and their guests, ETC sponsors and Rancho Murieta business owners. Tickets available at Ace Hardware and ETC ticket tables.

Note: Discounted tickets for ETC Members are only available at Ace Hardware and ETC ticket tables.

Memberships: Joelle Maggio 951-544-0858

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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](#).

June 9

6:38 p.m., During routine patrol of Lake Chesbro, patrol observed two individuals paddleboarding in violation of Lake Chesbro body contact regulations. Using the patrol vehicle PA system, subjects were directed to return to shore and complied without incident. Contact was made with guest associated with De La Cruz Drive. The resident was not present. Citation was issued for Rule IX, Section 1 (Guest Without Resident) and Rule IX, Section 2 (Swimming/Body Contact -Lake Chesbro).

June 10

4:31 p.m., patrol responded to a report of several juvenile males preparing to jump from the Yellow Bridge. Upon arrival, approximately eight juveniles were observed near the bridge railing. Using the patrol vehicle PA system, patrol directed the group to move away from the edge, and they complied. The group stated they were not planning to jump due to shallow water conditions. Patrol remained on scene until the group dispersed.

5:45 p.m., Patrol observed a black BMW fail to stop at the intersection of Pera Drive and Guadalupe Drive in violation of Rule II, Section 5 (Stop Signs). The vehicle committed a second stop sign violation at Guadalupe Drive and Puerto Drive before parking on Fuente De Paz. Citation issued.

June 12

3:16 a.m., Patrol responded to a report of a group of individuals walking through the neighborhood, creating excessive

noise and causing a disturbance. Upon arrival, patrol contacted a group of four subjects who stated they were experiencing issues with another resident in the area. Patrol advised the group of the community curfew regulations and instructed them to return home quietly. The subjects acknowledged the instruction and departed the area.

June 13

12:52 a.m., Patrol observed a gray Infiniti parked in the Riverview Park parking lot after operating hours in violation of Rule IX, Section 2 (Park Hours). Upon contacting the driver and advising them to leave the area, the individual responded with profanity toward patrol and initially refused to comply. The vehicle remained in the parking lot for a short period before departing.

1:07 a.m., patrol observed a vehicle parked at Riverview Park after operating hours in violation of Rule IX, Section 2 (Park Hours). Patrol utilized the public address system to advise the driver that the park was closed.

The driver responded with profanity toward patrol and remained in the parking lot briefly before departing the area. Further investigation revealed the vehicle had been granted access by the listed resident, who advised the driver was dropping them off. A citation was issued for the violation.

June 14

1:38 a.m., Patrol responded to a report from a resident at Sobon Lane regarding a suspicious white sedan repeatedly circling the neighborhood. Patrol arrived at approximately 1:10 a.m. and conducted an area check. During the search, patrol observed a white Kia traveling on Murieta Drive toward Jackson Highway. Patrol recognized the vehicle from earlier in the

shift when it had been observed parked near Lone Pine Hill.

Upon relaying the vehicle information to Dispatch, it was determined that the vehicle had been admitted into the community as a guest shortly after being observed leaving the area.

June 15

1:14 a.m., A resident reported two subjects loitering outside the residence and suspected they were preparing to engage in nuisance behavior. The complaint was related to a similar incident involving the same individuals the previous week.

Patrol arrived and observed the subjects in the area. While gathering information, one subject approached the patrol vehicle wearing an elderly-man mask, looked into the driver's side window, and fled on foot.

Patrol contacted both subjects and directed them to leave the area. The subjects were identified as being associated with Fuente De Paz. One subject was a juvenile in violation of curfew. Patrol left a voicemail for the parents of the involved subjects and remained in the area to monitor compliance. The subjects departed without further incident.

9:11 a.m., Security Supervisor Arino responded to a report of a juvenile, approximately six years old, unattended at Riverview Park. Upon arrival, the juvenile was located at the park bus stop. Attempts to identify the child through verbal communication were unsuccessful. A community member provided contact information for an individual familiar with local families. Security Supervisor Arino contacted the individual, who identified the child as of Leyenda Court. The juvenile was safely reunited with his mother.

June 18

8:55 p.m., Patrol received a report of a gray, lowered sedan driving recklessly within the Riverview Project area

of Murieta South. The vehicle was last seen traveling toward Divac Court. Patrol responded and located an Infiniti parked on Divac Court. Contact was made with the driver, who was advised of the complaint and reminded to obey all posted speed limits while operating a vehicle within the community.

June 20

11:03 p.m., Patrol responded to a report of loud music originating from a residence. Upon arrival, patrol observed a large gathering with a DJ and amplified music audible from the street. Patrol contacted the homeowner and advised them of the community noise ordinance. The resident initially stated he would accept any resulting citation but ultimately agreed to lower the volume and discontinue the music.

Patrol observed compliance and remained in the area to monitor the situation. A second complaint was received while patrol remained on scene; however, the music had already been discontinued. Patrol advised dispatch to refer any subsequent complaints to the Sacramento County Sheriff's Department non-emergency line if the disturbance resumed.

June 21

6:37 p.m., Patrol responded to a report of a black Ford Transit van parked near De La Cruz Drive and Via Bernini with the driver slumped over and unresponsive. Upon arrival, patrol located a Ford Transit with the driver asleep inside. Patrol made contact and successfully awakened the driver. The driver showed no signs of impairment and no odor of alcohol was detected. The driver stated he had been awake since approximately 5 a.m. and had pulled over to rest. The driver was identified as a vendor providing catering services at Domingo Drive. The driver departed without incident. ★

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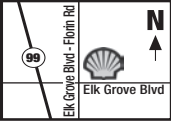
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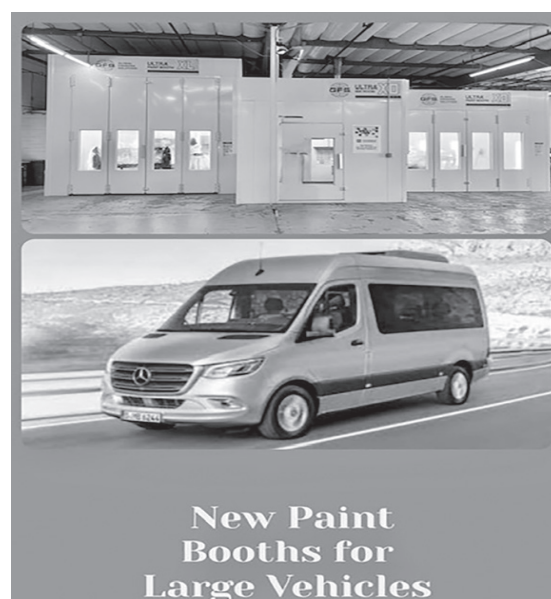
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Declaration of Independence

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.—That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, —That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.—Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harrass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences:

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our Brittish brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.



Rancho Murieta Association July 4 Schedule

Summerfest July 3 Celebration – Sponsored by Summerfest:
Stonehouse Park 4 to 11 p.m.
DJ, bounce houses, bar, line dancing, water balloon contest for kids at 6 p.m.
Food Trucks: Bangin Churro Bar, Hefty Gyros and Wildfire Pizza.
No food trucks on Sunday.
Pancake Breakfast - Sponsored by RM Kiwanis Club:
7 to 9:30 a.m. at Stonehouse Park.
Advance tickets \$6 (6 years and over), \$9 at event.
Purchase tickets at rmkiwanis.org or at RMA Building
Pancakes, scrambled eggs, sausage, OJ and coffee.
46th Annual Fun Run – sponsored by Erin Howard Bailey of Murieta Health Club:
Adults: 5K Run 7:30 a.m. at North Gazebo. Children 10 and under: 8:15 a.m. at the park across from the North Gazebo. No prior signup required. Call John McNamee 916-206-3246 with questions.
Parade down Murieta Parkway – Sponsored by RMA:
Lineup time 9 a.m.-9:30 a.m. at Murieta Parkway and De La Cruz Drive.
Parade begins at 10 a.m.
Parade route: Begin at Murieta Parkway and De La Cruz Drive, proceed down parkway, turn left on Marr Drive, loop behind the RMA building and back onto the parkway.
Drop-off location on De La Cruz Drive
Residents with vintage cars must register with RMA.
For a registration form, contact RMA at 916-354-3500.
Parade rules:
No water guns, balloons or confetti cannons. Candy is permitted.
No commercial golf carts, walkers, vehicles, etc.
Non-resident vehicles are not allowed. Only individuals and local nonprofit groups may participate.



The Rancho Murieta Association is enhancing this year's July 4 celebration in honor of the nation's 250th anniversary with an expanded fireworks show and a patriotic display along Laguna Joaquin featuring a row of Betsy Ross flags and a large American flag flown from the association's new aerial lift. File photo by Gail Bullen

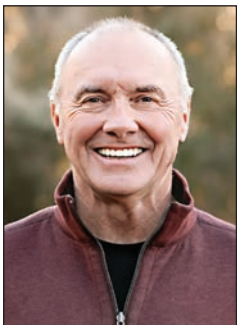
Only vintage (1975 or older) vehicles and local nonprofit vehicles are allowed.
A registration form is available at the RMA office or online at ranchomurieta.org.
Chairs and other belongings can't be placed for the parade until 24 hours prior to the event. They must be placed behind the curb, not in the street or bike lane.
Music at the Gazebo – Sponsored by RMA:
DJ music and dancing, 7 to 9:30 p.m.

Fireworks at Laguna Joaquin (front lake) - Sponsored by RMA
Fireworks begin at 9:30 p.m. with a spectacular "Golden Opener."
No blankets in common areas prior to 7 p.m. on July 3.
No plastic or tarps are allowed.
Escuela Gate will not be used for exiting the community after the fireworks.
General Information:
Guest Passes: Pick up passes at the RMA Building Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mail or hand deliver to your guests in advance. Five free passes per lot, then \$5 per pass. All guests must have a pass or be on a resident's guest list. (Please also provide passes to guests on your guest list.)
Events limited to Rancho Murieta Association residents and their guests. Guests must be accompanied by the resident who invited them.
Laguna Joaquin. Golf carts must stay on the path around the lake. No parking on path.
For more information, contact RMA at (916) 354-3500. ★

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SUNDAY
12 PM - 8 PM



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SUNDAY - THURSDAY
9 AM - 12 AM

FRIDAY - SATURDAY
9 AM - 2 AM