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RIVER VALLEY TIMES

42ND YEAR • ISSUE 18

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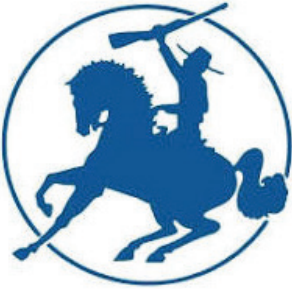
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CSD Board Approves Formal Response to Grand Jury Report



The Rancho Murieta Community Services District's formal response comes nearly three months after the Sacramento County Grand Jury issued its report June 24. The board unanimously approved the response Sept. 16, two weeks before the Sept. 30 deadline. Courtesy photo

**By Gail Bullen
River Valley Times Reporter**

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - The Rancho Murieta Community Services District Board of Directors unanimously approved its formal response to a Sacramento County Grand Jury report that credited the district with making financial improvements but found ongoing

problems with overdue audits, management turnover, governance and ethics.

Interim General Manager Amelia Wilder explained most of the district's response during the Sept. 16 meeting, with District Counsel Patrick Enright addressing legal and conflict-of-interest issues. Director Linda Butler questioned whether the Grand Jury would later review the

district's progress in carrying out the promised corrective actions.

The 2025-26 Grand Jury report, released June 24 under the title "Rancho Murieta Community Services District: Still a Work in Progress," contained 12 findings and 11 recommendations. The district's response was due Sept. 24.

Wilder said preparing the response
Continued on page 2

RMA Cites Ex-Director for Skating with Dog

**By Gail Bullen
River Valley Times Reporter**

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - Former Rancho Murieta Association Director Danny Carrillo has stopped skateboarding through the community with his dog, Leo, running alongside him after receiving a violation notice alleging he was tethered to the dog, an allegation he disputes.

Carrillo said he has skateboarded with Leo – and with another dog before Leo – for more than 10 years without receiving a warning or violation notice, including during the nearly five years he served on the RMA board.

Since receiving the Aug. 28 RMA notice, Carrillo has been carrying 41-pound Leo to the North Gate where they begin their ride outside the RMA-controlled community.

The notice states that Carrillo was observed: "tethered to a dog by a leash while riding a skateboard/longboard." It cites an RMA rule prohibiting a person from riding a bicycle, skateboard or scooter while tethered to another
Continued on page 11



Former Rancho Murieta Association Director Danny Carrillo poses with his skateboard and dog, Leo. RMA issued Carrillo a violation notice after he was seen riding through the community with his dog. Courtesy photo

Hip Service Brings Dance Party to Lake Clementia



Singer Mackenzie Hamel and Hip Service's electric violinist draw the night's strongest response with their performance of ABBA's "Dancing Queen." Hamel, a Rancho Murieta native who received an ETC scholarship in 2016, performs with Hip Service during the Aug. 22 ETC concert at Lake Clementia Amphitheater.

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

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - Hip Service brought 18 performers, high-energy choreography and music spanning generations to Lake Clementia Amphitheater on Aug. 22, keeping much of the crowd dancing throughout the Entertainment, Theatre and Culture for Rancho Murieta concert.

The Sacramento-based group combined powerhouse vocals with horns, percussion, a rhythm section, dancers and an electric violinist. Its repertoire ranged from Motown and hits of the 1970s and '80s to contemporary music.

"The crowd was on their feet pretty much the entire night," ETC President JT Turner said. "People were dancing, singing along and just having a great time."

The night's strongest response came when singer Mackenzie Hamel performed ABBA's "Dancing Queen" accompanied by the violinist. Hamel drew that enthusiastic response before the crowd learned that she was from Rancho Murieta and had received an ETC scholarship in 2016.

Hamel graduated from the University of Nevada, Reno, in 2020 with degrees in English and theater after performing onstage and working behind the scenes in college productions. After returning to Sacramento, she became artistic director of a performing arts preschool. She auditioned for Hip Service in 2023 and began performing with the group the following summer.

"The bonus of having our local girl Mackenzie Hamel up on stage was super special and just topped it all off," ETC board member Jane Rosetta said.

Before the concert,
Continued on page 2

Hip Service Brings Dance Party to Lake Clementia

Continued from page 1

ETC presented its annual scholarship to Christian Lozada, a Pleasant Grove High School graduate who plans to study computer engineering at Sacramento State while continuing his violin studies and performing with the university orchestra.

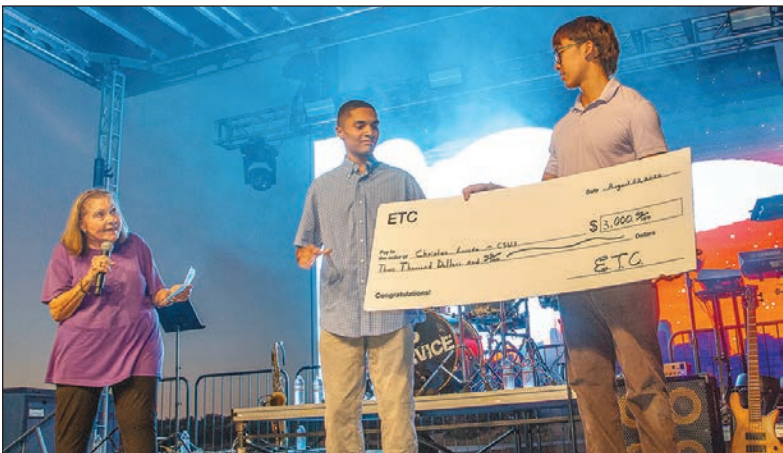
The \$3,000 award was ETC’s largest scholarship to date. Lozada said years of studying violin taught him discipline, persistence and community engagement: qualities he expects to carry into

engineering.

“Not only do you have to be a hard worker, but you also have to be an innovator and try and find ways to improve the world in which we live,” he said.

Last year’s scholarship recipient, Joseph Lew, presented the check to Lozada. ETC also provides grants to local elementary schools for arts, music and drama programs.

See more concert photos at [therivervalleytimes.com](#). ★



ETC board member Stephanie Stanislaus and last year’s scholarship winner, Joseph Lew, present a \$3,000 check to this year’s recipient, Christian Lozada.

CSD Board Approves Formal Response to Grand Jury Report

Continued from page 1

highlighted how much progress the district has made since a 2023 Grand Jury report concluded that it had “lost the public trust.”

“A lot of what they asked for were the audits and the financial upgrades to our systems, which we have been working on,” Wilder said.

The district agreed with most of the Grand Jury’s findings and reported that many of its recommendations have been implemented or are underway.

Wilder noted a typographical error in the draft response concerning improvements to the district’s Great Plains accounting system. The response stated that accounting modules were upgraded in fall 2026, but Wilder said the work was completed in fall 2025.

She said the upgraded system helped Finance and Administration Director Cecilia Min and her staff reconstruct the district’s financial records.

Wilder said the district has completed the fiscal year 2022-23 and 2023-24 audits and is working simultaneously

on the 2024-25 and 2025-26 financial records. Accounting procedure manuals are expected to be completed by Dec. 31, although they may have to be revised if the district selects a new financial software system.

Staff members continue to uncover problems as they reconstruct earlier accounting records, Wilder said.

“Every stone they turn over, they find, you know, a rattlesnake’s nest under there,” she said. “Then they have to go back and recreate and reconstruct all this past accounting, and it’s very difficult to do.”

Wilder credited Min and her staff with making substantial progress, including reducing the district’s chart of accounts from more than 2,000 accounts to 99.

Butler emphasized that finishing the overdue audits will not complete the district’s financial work.

“The important thing is to recognize that all of the work that’s had to be done behind getting the audits done is going to go on,” Butler said.

The district also responded to findings involving management

turnover and the delay in recruiting a permanent general manager. The Grand Jury found that the district waited approximately 10 months before beginning its search.

The district partially disagreed with that finding. It acknowledged the delay but noted that it had appointed an interim general manager, retained an outside human resources firm and was completing the recruitment process. Earlier in the Sept. 16 meeting, the board approved a four-year employment agreement with Marti Brown, who is expected to begin work as general manager Oct. 19.

The district agreed that its conflict-of-interest code needed to be updated. The board adopted a revised code that reflects current job titles and identifies the officials and employees required to file Form 700 Statements of Economic Interests.

Enright said state law requires the board to review its conflict-of-interest code every two years, even if no changes are necessary.

The district, however, disagreed with the Grand Jury’s conclusion that a

director’s participation in discussions about a possible water-connection moratorium created the appearance of a financial conflict of interest.

The report did not name the director, but the finding concerned Director Randy Jenco, who owns undeveloped property in Rancho Murieta where he is building a home.

Enright said the district agreed that Jenco participated in the discussions but disagreed that he had a conflict of interest. He cited both a district legal opinion and the California Fair Political Practices Commission’s decision not to pursue an earlier complaint involving the same issue.

The district also adopted written procedures for identifying Form 700 filers, tracking deadlines and providing the forms to the public. Wilder said the required forms were current, with one exception involving a staff position that had not yet been added to the electronic filing system.

In response to the Grand Jury’s findings regarding training, the district adopted a policy requiring ethics and fiscal training

for board members. Wilder said current directors had completed their ethics and harassment-prevention training. Training for newly elected or reelected directors will be arranged after the November election.

The district also disputed portions of the Grand Jury’s findings involving its relationship with the Rancho Murieta Country Club.

Wilder said the district’s 1988 reclaimed-water agreement allows treated wastewater to be disposed of at three locations: the golf course, a proposed park that was never built and a maintenance yard that was also never constructed at the contemplated location.

“Really, the only place that we have to dispose of the reclaimed water is the Country Club,” Wilder said.

She described the arrangement as beneficial to both the district and the Country Club because other wastewater agencies may incur substantial costs to dispose of recycled water.

The Grand Jury also questioned whether a district loan to the Country

Club fully accounted for increases in the Local Agency Investment Fund interest rate. The loan was made after a pump at Bass Lake failed in 2021.

Wilder said the pump was necessary for the district to deliver recycled water to the golf course. She said the Country Club made every payment on time and paid the additional interest required by the loan agreement.

“They did everything that they said they were going to do,” she said.

After Wilder and Enright reviewed the response, Butler asked whether the district could report its progress to the Grand Jury after six months.

Wilder said the Grand Jury had not requested an additional report. Enright explained that the membership of the county Grand Jury changes each year.

“But the report doesn’t change,” Butler responded.

Enright and Wilder agreed that the district could continue tracking its progress, even if a follow-up submission is not required.

Directors approved the response 4-0. Jenco was absent. ★



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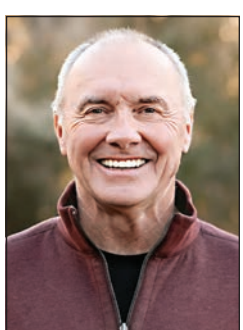
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RMA Sets Oct. 6 Budget Workshop

Reporter Gail Bullen Recovering from Crash

By Gail Bullen
River Valley Times Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - The Rancho Murieta Association Board of Directors completed a light agenda in about 17 minutes on Sept. 15, setting an Oct. 6 budget workshop and discussing the upcoming board election, damage to the gate arms, and other business.

The budget workshop will begin at 6:30 p.m., a time chosen to accommodate residents. Staff has prepared a preliminary 2027 budget covering the association's ongoing expenses. Still, General Manager Vicky Lentz said it was not ready for board action and would be considered at the workshop. The board will discuss possible additions to the budget at the workshop.

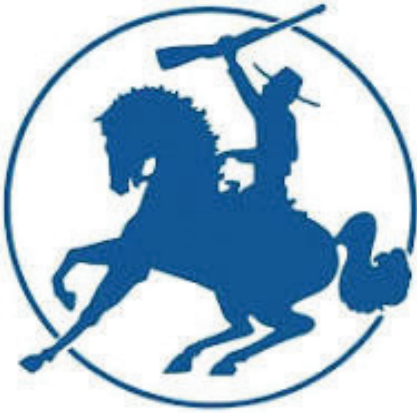
Lentz also reminded residents that RMA's annual membership meeting and election of directors will be held at 6 p.m. Nov. 19. Ballots are expected to be mailed in mid-October.

She said RMA received self-qualifying nomination forms from incumbents Ernie Cowles and John Haviland. Lentz did not mention that three board positions are up for election, leaving fewer candidates than available seats.

Director Tom Reimers also raised a Compliance Committee proposal to fine residents who damage gate arms while entering the community.

"It knocks the gate out of commission until someone can respond to it," Reimers said. "It is inconvenient for a lot of our residents."

Compliance Officer Chris Smith said



responding to gate damage is costly and requires considerable staff time. Most of the incidents involve golf carts, he said, which can be difficult to identify without RMA tags.

Board President Patrick O'Hern directed the Compliance Committee to prepare a proposal for review by the Governing Documents Committee.

"Then we can bring it up again," O'Hern said.

In other business, directors unanimously approved spending up to \$8,625 for a full audit of RMA's 2026 financial statements. The association's last full audit was conducted in 2023.

The board also approved its 2027 reserve study, which estimated that reserves are 81% funded and recommended a 3% increase in the reserve assessment. Staff said the increase was necessary because the assessment was not raised last year and costs have risen due to inflation.

★



River Valley Times reporter Gail Bullen covers a Rancho Murieta community event. Bullen is recovering from injuries suffered in a bicycle accident. Photo courtesy of Carole Kramer

By MPG Staff

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - River Valley Times reporter Gail Bullen is recovering from serious injuries suffered in an Aug. 29 bicycle accident in Grants Pass, Oregon.

Bullen fractured her left collarbone, five ribs, her pelvis and sacrum. After being hospitalized, she was transferred to an

inpatient rehabilitation program in Medford. She has since returned home to Sacramento to continue her recovery.

Although her injuries have temporarily limited her ability to attend community events and take photographs, Bullen has continued to report and write remotely. Five stories that Bullen could not complete in time for the Sept.

11 print edition were subsequently published online.

Readers can find those stories – and check for additional coverage that may not appear in the Sept. 25 print edition – at rivalleyvalleytimes.com.

Community members are encouraged to continue sending news tips, announcements and photographs to Bullen at wilton.reporter@gmail.com. ★



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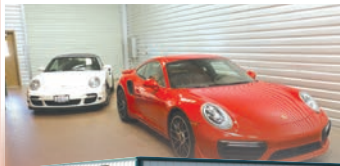
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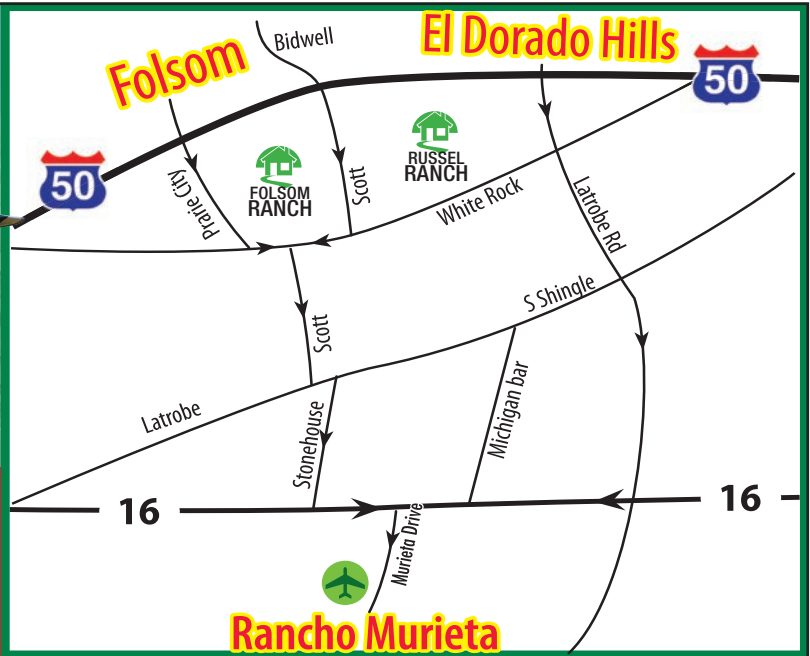
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CSD Addresses Water Odor, Gate Security, New GM Contract

By Gail Bullen
River Valley Times Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - Rancho Murieta Community Services District officials addressed recent drinking-water odor problems, gate security and several technology improvements during the Sept. 16 Board of Directors meeting.

The board also approved a four-year employment agreement with Marti Brown, who is expected to begin work as general manager Oct. 19 at an annual salary of \$225,000.

See the separate story about the board’s response to a Grand Jury report released in June.

Water Odor Explained

Chief Plant Operator Travis Bohannon took responsibility for the taste and odor problems residents experienced in August, saying the timing of aquatic harvesting contributed to the problem.

Bohannon said the harvester arrived during one of the hottest weeks of the summer. Removing aquatic growth can release geosmin, a naturally occurring compound that causes an earthy taste and odor.

Geosmin is not harmful, Bohannon said, but becomes more noticeable when the water is warm. The district uses powdered activated carbon at its conventional treatment plant to control the problem but ran out of carbon at approximately the same time.

Carbon from the district’s Canadian supplier can take about a month to arrive. Bohannon has since found a supplier in Texas that should be able to deliver it more quickly.

“This one was a little self-inflicted,” Bohannon said. “I take responsibility for this one, and I do apologize to the district for how this one happened.”

The district has a two-year contract with the harvesting company. Bohannon said he will try to schedule future harvesting when the water is colder and odor problems are less severe.

New membranes ordered for the water-treatment plant were expected to arrive the following Monday, reducing the staff time now spent making almost daily repairs.

The district’s excess recycled-water supply declined from approximately 56



An aquatic harvester used in hot weather causes a water odor issue. The board discussed the topic at the Rancho Murieta Community Services District meeting on Sept. 16. Photo courtesy of Aquatic Harvesting Inc.

million gallons at the beginning of the irrigation season to slightly more than 21 million gallons as of the meeting. Recycled water will continue to be delivered to the golf courses until the supply is depleted or rain begins.

Gate and Security Improvements

Interim General Manager Amelia Wilder announced that the recurring Lago Gate malfunction had been repaired by replacing the failed wired connection with a wireless system.

“Hallelujah,” Wilder said. “Everybody on the north, it has been fixed.”

Security Supervisor Branden Arino said gate failures can require traffic lanes to be closed, potentially delaying emergency vehicles. He plans to discuss with the Rancho Murieta Association whether malfunctioning gates should remain open rather than blocking lanes needed by fire engines and ambulances.

Arino also cautioned drivers against following too closely behind residents entering through automatic gates. He said a driver recently struck the inner resident gate at South Gate, leaving it “hanging on by a thread.”

Cellular-enabled iPads have been placed at both gates so officers can continue processing visitors during internet outages.

The board approved an upgrade to the ABDI gate-entry system that will provide license-plate recognition, driver’s-license scanning, offline visitor processing and a resident web and mobile portal.

The five-year agreement costs \$2,414.50 per month, or approximately \$144,870 over 60 months, plus sales tax. The \$18,590 installation charge was waived.

Arino also is discussing more visible directional signs with the RMA Compliance Committee because existing signs can blend into the landscaping.

Two August incidents of note included a dog bite and gate officers assisting a disoriented resident who arrived at South Gate in a golf cart after traveling along the highway. Using the “Bring Me Home Safe” program, officers escorted him home.

Gere’s Statements Challenged

During public comment, Jeff Pearson and Bob Keil separately challenged statements Director Bill Gere made on Nextdoor about water costs, development and water-augmentation fees. Gere is running for re-election.

Pearson, speaking for Rancho North development, read from a post in which Gere said a developer had “repeatedly stated” it would not pay for water exploration. Gere also wrote that the entire \$2 million to \$3 million cost advocated by Pearson and several CSD candidates would have to be paid by residents.

Pearson said the post did not identify the developer, explain what it had refused to pay for or establish the basis for the estimate. He also objected to Gere’s reference to “your slate,” saying he does not have a slate.

Pearson said residents could not tell

whether Gere was speaking as a private citizen, as a sitting director, as a candidate for reelection or as all three. “This lack of transparency in public statements creates a trust and confidence issue for the public,” Pearson said.

Keil disputed Gere’s statements about water-augmentation fees. He said Gere had suggested the fees could be spent on other purposes and that they amounted to “freebies to the developer.”

Keil said those statements were inaccurate and asked District Counsel Patrick Enright to give another public presentation explaining how the fees are collected, what they may legally be used for and how long the district may retain the money.

“We’re at a crisis point right now where we need to spend that money, and the board is reluctant to spend it,” Keil said.

Keil also asked the district to revisit Lake Clementia as a potential water source by temporarily ending body-contact recreation, applying to convert the lake to potable-water use and conducting the required testing.

Director Tim Maybee said recreational use is an RMA matter and that testing would be costly. Bohannon added that the district’s state regulator had advised against testing unless the district was prepared to proceed because the results would remain valid for only a limited time.

Board President John Merchant said it was a broader issue that the Improvements Committee could discuss.

“So, nothing is being done,” Keil asked. “It’s a bigger topic,” Merchant responded.

Other Improvements

Wilder said the district has ordered a new boardroom audiovisual system that will integrate microphones, recordings and transcription while helping meet accessibility requirements.

Cybersecurity improvements have been installed and are being tested. The district also is pursuing an AT&T wireless backup system to keep its phones and gates operating during internet outages.

The district is working with Sacramento County on a wildfire and flood evacuation plan. Wilder said upcoming union negotiations are expected to include a proposal allowing gate officers to help direct traffic onto and off Highway 16 during emergencies.

The Lake Clementia spillway culvert repair is nearly complete, with additional rock and concrete work remaining before the rainy season. ★

Agenda Rules, Candidates Forum Raise Questions at CSD Meetings

By Gail Bullen
River Valley Times Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - Several questions about how the Rancho Murieta Community Services District conducts its business – from who controls meeting agendas to whether the district should sponsor a candidates’ forum – surfaced during the Board of Directors’ Aug. 26 meeting.

The board also heard residents question how the district is preparing for costly litigation, how much it is spending on legal matters and whether comments by Board President John Merchant on water policy could affect public confidence in board deliberations.

See separate stories on the board’s 3-2 decision to dissolve the Water Vision Working Group, several looming district projects led by the Pera Drive sink-hole, and the completion of the district’s overdue 2022-23 and 2023-24 audits.

Agenda

One of the sharpest exchanges involved procedures for putting items on meeting agendas.

Director Tim Maybee said he was confused about whether one member of a committee could prevent an item from being placed on an agenda.

“I was not aware that a sole person on a committee could stop agenda items and/or approve it,” Maybee said, asking district counsel Patrick Enright for clarification.

Enright said he would

review district policy. Merchant acknowledged the process needed clarification, saying there probably was no official designation spelling out how committee agendas were created.

“If we need to write something down and clear that up ... please, let’s do it,” Merchant said.

Developer Bob Kyle then pointed out that the board packet already contained a letter from his attorney David Cameron addressing agenda procedures.

“We actually paid our attorney to research the process for putting things on the agenda,” Kyle said. “The question has been answered. I would hope you would refer to that and not have to pay your attorney to redo it.”

Enright said he had the letter and was preparing a response.

Cameron’s Aug. 12 letter said the district code gives the general manager, in consultation with the board president, responsibility for setting the board agenda. But it also cited provisions allowing an individual director or committee member to request that an item be placed on a board agenda.

Cameron wrote that when those procedures are followed, district policy says the general manager “shall place” the matter on the agenda for the next reasonably available board meeting. He disputed the idea that separate authorization from the board president was required.

The controversy grew out of the Aug. 4

Improvements Committee meeting and a request by Director Randy Jenco concerning an emergency water tank, which Director Bill Gere confirmed he’d left off the agenda.

However, district guidelines distinguish between adding an item to a committee agenda and asking that an item be placed on a subsequent board agenda. The five-business-day provisions cited by Cameron concern board agendas. Committee agendas have separate procedures, including requirements for adding an item after an agenda has been published.

That distinction became important when Catherine Silvera, a retired Sacramento County Counsel attorney, addressed the board. She is also a candidate for the CSD Board.

Silvera said Cameron’s letter raised “important issues about the rights and responsibilities of elected directors” and said an independently elected director should be able to bring an issue forward under district policy.

“This community deserves assurances that proper procedure for setting agendas will be followed in the future, especially concerning important water issues,” she said.

Gere disputed her interpretation. He maintained that the general manager and board president set the agenda. The two also disagreed about when Jenco submitted his request.

The board did not resolve the competing interpretations. Enright

agreed to review the matter and provide written clarification.

District Backs Away from Candidates’ Night

Governance questions returned when Interim General Manager Amelia Wilder asked whether the district should organize a candidates’ night for the November CSD election.

The field of 10 candidates contributed to concerns about space, staff time and cost.

Merchant recalled a previous gathering where people were turned away after the boardroom reached its 69-person fire-code limit. Maybee said managing a forum with 10 candidates would be a “monumental task.”

Enright said the district was not required to sponsor a forum and such events sometimes are organized by nonprofits or other groups. Jenco, however, said bringing all of the candidates together to answer the same questions would be more useful than separate events.

With Gere recusing himself because he is a candidate, the board reached consensus that the district would not organize the event. Jenco favored district sponsorship; Butler, Maybee and Merchant did not.

The board left open the possibility of assisting an outside organization if one proposed a forum.

Rancho Murieta developer Carol Anderson Ward said she wanted a forum including all candidates. She objected to

the prospect of Save Our Lakes & Open Spaces (SOLOS) organizing an event for candidates it supported and said it appeared that the gathering would be held on open-space property belonging to her development.

“I think to make this fair, we should have all the candidates together,” Ward said.

SOLOS moved its event to Stonehouse Park following Ward’s comment at the meeting.

Enright cautioned that because the event involved an election, the district could not “be playing favorites” in deciding which organization to assist. Maybee mentioned the League of Women Voters as an example of a nonpartisan organization that could conduct a forum.

Residents Question Litigation Costs, Board Process

Governance concerns also surfaced during public comment.

Roger Formanek, who described himself as a retired state attorney who had handled major contract litigation and arbitration, urged the district to investigate whether the California Attorney General’s Office could provide assistance with litigation facing the district.

Formanek warned that complex litigation could become extremely expensive and said the district should ensure it had appropriate legal representation. He acknowledged he did not know whether the district qualified for representation by the Attorney General’s Office.

Mike Martel followed by asking how much the district had spent on litigation during the year. Finance Director Cecilia Min said the information was contained in district financial

records and offered to provide Martel with a breakdown.

Jeff Pearson of Rancho Murieta Properties raised a different concern involving an Aug. 23 social-media post by Merchant titled “The High Stakes of a Community Water Plan.”

Pearson acknowledged Merchant’s right to express his views as a private citizen but said the post advocated positions related to water issues before the board and matters involved in pending litigation. He questioned whether the comments could affect “public confidence in the CSD’s handling of the matter” and raise questions about “the impartiality of board deliberations.”

Pearson distributed copies and asked that the material become part of the public record. Merchant, who is also vice president for SOLOS, did not respond to Pearson’s comments during the meeting.

One final process complaint came from resident Jim Farrell during discussion of a \$21,168 annual cybersecurity expenditure.

The discussion expanded into roughly 25 minutes about unbudgeted expenditures and how the district should handle them. Farrell said that was the kind of discussion that should have occurred first at the Finance Committee.

“Don’t be holding your finance committee meetings here,” Farrell told the board. “The public has told you your meetings drag on too long. Personally, I’m really interested in your business; I find this conversation boring.”

Merchant responded that the board had just agreed to send the broader budget issue there, and the board proceeded to approve the cybersecurity expenditure. ★

Two More Overdue CSD Audits Completed

Story and photo by Gail Bullen
River Valley Times Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - Rancho Murieta Community Services District has completed two more overdue annual audits, moving the district closer to catching up after years of delayed financial reporting and accounting problems.

Auditors from Richardson & Company presented the fiscal 2022-23 and 2023-24 audits to the CSD Finance Committee Aug. 24, telling directors that they had seen significant improvement in the district’s accounting and preparation for the audits. Two days later, the full board voted unanimously to receive and file both audit reports.

The district now has completed three audits in about a year and has two more fiscal years to finish. The 2024-25 audit is overdue, while the 2025-26 audit is not yet past its filing deadline. Finance Director Cecilia Min told the Finance Committee that staff is working on both years simultaneously and hopes to have the accounting work for both completed by the end of the year.

At the Aug. 26 board meeting, Director Linda Butler noted the change.

“We’ve gotten to the point where we have one that’s still past due and one that’s current,” Butler said. “Which is really great.”

Auditors Cite Measurable Improvement

Ingrid Shepline of Richardson & Co. said one indication of the improvement was the number of adjustments auditors had to make to the district’s financial statements. The auditors made seven adjustments for fiscal 2022-23 and four for 2023-24.

“That’s a significant improvement compared to nearly 40 adjustments that we’ve had in previous audits,” Shepline said. “Definitely an improvement in the processes for preparing for the audit.”

She specifically credited Min for the change.

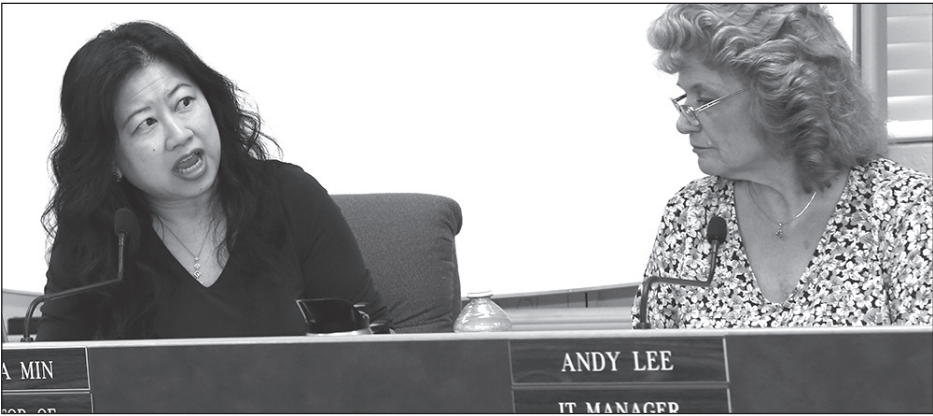
“I definitely want to recognize that Cecilia did a lot of work to get to that point,” Shepline said.

Later in the presentation, Shepline returned to Min’s role in getting the district caught up, noting that Min has had to reconstruct financial records for years when she was not the district’s finance director.

“The fact that we’re almost current” represents significant improvement, Shepline said. She commended Min “for all the excellent work that she’s done in preparing for the audits,” adding that Min was working on fiscal years “that she wasn’t here doing the accounting,” which required her to reconstruct and clean up earlier records. Shepline also said Min had been “very responsive during the audit process.”

The audits still list three material weaknesses involving keeping the accounting system current, year-end closing procedures and accounting for developer-donated infrastructure. The findings relate to the earlier fiscal years covered by the audits; district management reported that the accounting had been brought current as of January 2026.

Four findings previously classified as



Cecilia Min, Rancho Murieta Community Services District director of Finance; and Ingrid Shepline, a partner with the Richardson & Company accounting firm, report the completion of the long overdue audits for fiscal years 2022-23 and 2023-24 at the Aug. 24 Finance Committee meeting and at the Aug. 26 board meeting.

significant deficiencies were considered adequately addressed and removed from the current audit reports.

The auditors did identify other areas where additional work is needed. Among them are the district’s procedures for voided checks, inconsistencies between its reserve policy and accounting records, and an investment policy that has not been updated since 2016. State law requires the investment policy to be reviewed annually by the board.

One new control is an audit-preparation checklist requiring balance-sheet accounts to be reconciled before records go to the auditors. Min linked that process to the reduction in audit adjustments.

Auditors also discussed the accounting for infrastructure built by developers and later turned over to the district. Although no money changes hands when the infrastructure is transferred, it becomes a district asset that CSD ultimately must maintain. Min said staff is continuing to make sure developer-donated infrastructure dating back to 2007 has been properly recorded.

Resident Asks How It Happened

The discussion prompted Rancho Murieta resident Maryjane Fatigati, who has a finance and accounting background, to question how previous boards could have made financial and budget decisions when basic accounting processes were not functioning reliably.

She pointed to bank reconciliations that had not been reviewed, inadequate transaction review and duplicate accounting.

“Who was watching the house here?” Fatigati asked.

Director Bill Gere acknowledged the extent of the past problems.

“If you look back for the last seven to 10 years, it’s beyond comprehension,” Gere said. “But in the last 16, 18 months since Cecilia’s been here, we’ve come a long, long way,” he said.

Director John Merchant said staff essentially had to rebuild five years of accounting records.

“We’re getting financial statements at this point that we can trust,” Merchant said.

Min described the completion of the audits in more personal terms.

“When I see the financial statement, the finalization, I felt really relieved. So is my team,” Min said.

She described the accounting she inherited as “so chopped up,” citing the absence of bank reconciliations and problems in

accounts payable.

“The AP person was a security guard,” Min said. “AP ... is the first step of the accounting. If she’s entering things incorrectly, I have to go back and recreate the whole thing.”

The employee Min referred to had previously worked as a CSD gate officer before transferring to an office position, according to previous River Valley Times reporting. Min’s broader point was that financial positions require employees with appropriate accounting expertise.

“I felt like we had not been having the right person in the post who can do financial reporting,” Min said. “You need the financial reporting, the GASB, the GAAP knowledge to do the accounting right. So not having the right person in the post hurts the organization.”

Min expressed relief that the work had reached this point.

“What a relief that we’re done,” she said.

When she was praised for the accomplishment, Min quickly added, “My team, too. My team, too. They’ve gone through a lot.”

Staff also has been addressing duplicate accounts-payable transactions. While reconstructing the fiscal 2024-25 accounting, staff found instances in which checks apparently had been voided but the associated transactions remained in the accounting system, potentially leaving duplicate expenses on the books. Staff identified and removed the duplicates.

Beginning in fiscal 2026-27, the district plans to prepare a monthly voided-check report, maintain documentation of voided checks and track check numbers sequentially.

Preliminary 2025-26 Figures Show \$819,000 Operating Loss

Along with the audits, Min presented the Finance Committee with preliminary financial results for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2026.

She cautioned that the figures are preliminary because staff still must complete bank reconciliations and reconcile balance-sheet accounts.

Operating revenue totaled about \$9.4 million, compared with a budget of about \$9.6 million. Operating expenses were approximately \$7.1 million, compared with a \$6.9 million budget, while general and administrative expenses were approximately \$3.1 million, compared with \$2.6 million budgeted. Total expenses were about \$10.2 million, or 107% of the \$9.5

million budget.

The preliminary figures show an \$819,000 operating loss before property-tax revenue. About \$990,000 in property-tax revenue covered the loss, leaving a positive operating result of \$171,000.

Min said that is not the position she ultimately wants the district to be in. Utility revenue should pay for operations, she said, allowing property-tax revenue to be retained as a reserve rather than used to cover an operating shortfall.

Unexpected repairs and maintenance were a major contributor to the higher spending. Min said operating expenses were at 103% of budget largely because of repairs and emergencies for which money had not been budgeted.

“When you look at the 103, it’s all the repair and maintenance that we have, which was never budgeted,” Min said. “All those emergencies that we had in the last so many months, we don’t have the budget for it.”

Min said the district changed that approach in the new budget.

“In the fiscal year 27, we did budget for some emergency, you know, contingency,” she said.

The preliminary year-end figures show the Water Fund with the largest operating deficit, about \$1 million, attributed primarily to higher repair and maintenance, consulting and salary expenses.

Wastewater had operating income of \$245,000. Drainage had an \$81,000 loss, with repair and maintenance costs \$55,000 over budget. Solid Waste had operating income of \$35,000, and Security had operating income of \$101,000, primarily because salary and benefit costs were lower than expected.

Other expenses also exceeded their budgets. Consulting costs included temporary staffing for vacant district positions as well as about \$16,000 for work on the district’s Great Plains accounting system. Human resources and recruitment expenses included HR to Go and \$18,000 for the general manager recruitment. Some legal expenses related to developer activity are expected to be reclassified as non-operating expenses.

Work Continues on Remaining Audits

For fiscal 2024-25, staff has had to enter accounting records for March through June because the district’s financial reporting for that year stopped in February 2025. Staff also has been correcting duplicate accounts-payable transactions, completing bond accounting and reviewing repair and maintenance expenses to identify expenditures that should be recorded as fixed assets.

Preparation for the 2025-26 audit began in August, with bank reconciliation about 30% complete at the time of the report.

“We have two years down, three audits down, but we have two more years to go,” Min told the Finance Committee.

At the board meeting two days later, Merchant said the goal is for the district to be current by the end of the year. Min was more cautious, saying she hopes to have the accounting for the two remaining years completed by then but cannot control the auditors’ schedule. ★



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CSD Dissolves Water Vision Working Group in 3-2 Vote

Story and photo
by Gail Bullen
River Valley Times
Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - The Rancho Murieta Community Services District Board voted 3-2 on Aug. 26 to dissolve the Water Vision Working Group following a brief review of a matrix developed to track the district’s water issues, projects and possible solutions.

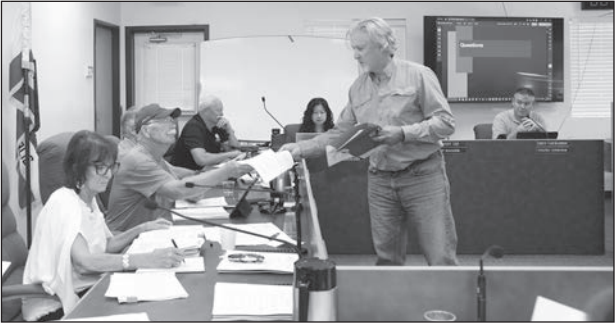
The matrix was designed to pull together the numerous water-related matters facing the district and show their status and next steps. It was intended to provide a single place to track work that had previously been spread among reports, studies and district discussions.

The board made no changes to the matrix. It was left as it had come out of the Improvements Committee.

Director Randy Jenco said the committee had already reviewed the matrix at the board’s direction and brought it back. He suggested that unless directors had questions, they move to the following agenda item: whether the Water Vision Working Group itself should continue.

“I believe everybody has heard the discussion at the Improvements Committee and listened to the review of the matrix,” Jenco said. “So, unless there’s any questions, I’m not sure what’s to be reviewed.”

The Water Vision Working Group was



Developer Jeff Pearson hands out material at the Rancho Murieta Community Services District Board meeting on Aug. 26. Pearson was a member of the Water Vision Working Group that was dissolved at the meeting.

structured to bring together different interests involved in Rancho Murieta’s water future. Its membership included Jenco representing the CSD board, Jeff Pearson of Rancho Murieta Properties representing the developers, the RMA general manager representing the homeowners association, and resident Tom Shewchuk representing the community. The staff members were Interim Operations Manager Travis Bohannon and Interim General Manager Amelia Wilder.

The board had assigned the group four areas of work: groundwater wells, Lake Clementia, preparation for an Urban Water Management Plan and a water audit. Shewchuk reminded directors that the board originally assigned three tasks and subsequently added the water audit at his request.

District counsel Patrick Enright recommended dissolving both the Water Vision Working Group and the Administrative Oversight Ad Hoc Committee and allowing the incoming general

manager to determine what groups, if any, should be used in the future.

Enright said the district already has standing committees, and the temporary groups had served a purpose while the district was operating with an interim general manager and other interim or vacant positions.

“I think they serve their purpose, but at this time we should start with a clean slate,” Enright said.

Jenco disagreed with dissolving the Water Vision Working Group. He said its work had barely begun because of obstacles it had encountered and suggested instead that the group be put on hold until a new general manager was hired. The new GM could then decide whether it should continue.

Director Linda Butler supported dissolution. She said the district plans to hire a water operations director whose professional responsibilities would encompass the work being performed by the group, including preparation of an Urban Water Management Plan and oversight of water, sewer

and drainage. She said working groups had provided a bridge while the district lacked an operations director, but those responsibilities ultimately should reside with professional staff.

Director Tim Maybee argued strongly for keeping the Water Vision Working Group, saying it should be considered separately from the Administrative Oversight Ad Hoc Committee.

“The working committee has probably produced more than our standing committees have on a lot of the subjects here,” Maybee said.

As one example, he pointed to the Dunn geophysics proposal, saying the working group had brought the board a clearly outlined proposal that included a budget.

“I think the work is good,” Maybee said. “I think this committee should stay in place.”

He said that after the new general manager hires an operations professional, the working group could assist that person.

Director Bill Gere favored dissolving the group and raised concerns about its composition. He said that if a Water Vision group were reconstituted, it should have a more fair and balanced representation of the community, have an agenda and operate under the Brown Act.

That prompted a pointed exchange with Pearson, who challenged Gere’s earlier characterization of the working group as being

made up of developers. Gere acknowledged making the statement and said he stood by it.

Pearson then asked, “Is Mr. Shewchuk a developer?”

“He owns a buildable lot,” Gere responded, drawing laughter from the audience.

Pearson defended both the composition and work of the group, saying it brought together people representing residents, the CSD board, RMA, development interests and the public.

“We’ve done a lot. We made a lot of progress,” Pearson said, adding that part of him viewed dissolving the group as snatching “defeat from the jaws of victory.”

He questioned the wisdom of eliminating an existing group in anticipation of hiring a water operations manager who was not yet on staff. A new manager, he said, would need time to learn the district’s complicated history and could benefit from the knowledge already assembled in the working group.

Shewchuk expressed a different kind of frustration. He reminded the board that it had chartered the working group to address wells, Lake Clementia and preparation for an Urban Water Management Plan and later agreed to add the water audit.

“You chartered us with four tasks,” Shewchuk said.

But he said the group had been stalled for six

months and, without a director of operations likely to be hired immediately, he saw little prospect of making progress in the next several months.

“I actually hope you do shut us down,” Shewchuk said. “Please vote to shut us down.”

Merchant said the district’s approach to water planning needs to move to a higher level, beginning with an Urban Water Management Plan as the district approaches the 3,000-connection threshold. He said the plan would assess whether the district can provide enough water for existing customers through droughts and emergencies as well as anticipated development over the next 20 years, and it would have to demonstrate that proposed supplies have the financing and infrastructure needed to make them more than “paper water.”

He said the district should use work already completed through the Integrated Water Master Plan and Water Vision Working Group as it develops a comprehensive water plan under the direction of professional operations staff.

The board voted 3-2 to dissolve the Water Vision Working Group, with Butler, Gere and Merchant in favor and Jenco and Maybee opposed.

The board then separately voted unanimously to dissolve the Administrative Oversight Ad Hoc Committee, effective immediately. ★

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.

Sept. 3

6:06 p.m., While conducting patrol at Lake Calero, Patrol observed three adult males fishing along the lake. The subjects were recognized from a previous incident involving guests fishing without a resident present and without valid California fishing licenses.

RMCS D Patrol contacted the group. One subject identified himself as a Rancho Murieta resident; however, RMCS D records did not show the subject as a listed resident, tenant or occupant. The subject stated he had

recently moved into the community. The subject was operating a golf cart registered to the same residence. Patrol advised the subject to have the property owner update the resident information with the appropriate records.

Patrol requested that all members of the group provide valid California fishing licenses. One subject provided a valid license. The other two subjects were unable to provide licenses but stated they had purchased them several days earlier. Patrol advised the subjects of Rancho Murieta fishing regulations requiring individuals over 16 years of age to possess a valid California fishing license while fishing.

Patrol attempted to contact the associated residence to verify the subject’s residency but received no answer. The

subjects were advised that fishing license compliance would be checked during future contacts. No enforcement action was taken at this time

Sept. 5

11:17 p.m., Lago Drive: Patrol responded to a noise complaint regarding loud music from a residential gathering. Upon arrival, Patrol contacted a resident associated with the residence, who agreed to lower the music. While Patrol was on scene, a neighboring resident approached and complained about the noise.

The resident associated with the gathering made a statement indicating an intention to confront the complainant before returning inside the residence. Patrol remained in the area to ensure the music was lowered. The music was reduced but remained audible from a nearby street.

Patrol advised that if additional complaints were received, the Sacramento County Sheriff’s Office should be notified.

Sept. 6

2:36 a.m., Patrol observed a vehicle at Gazebo Park after posted park hours. Patrol contacted the occupants and advised them of the violation. After contact, the group departed the area. Shortly afterward, Patrol located the same vehicle at Stonehouse Park in violation of the same park-hours rule.

8:55 p.m., RMCS D Patrol received a report of a vehicle collision involving the South Gate inner resident-lane gate arm. A review of South Gate traffic camera footage showed a newer model silver Lexus following closely behind another vehicle at a high rate of speed. The Lexus struck the gate arm and continued into Murieta South without stopping. The vehicle subsequently made a U-turn near the intersection of Murieta South Parkway and Celebrar Street and exited Murieta South in an unknown direction. South Gate LPR footage was reviewed; however, the vehicle was traveling too fast for the license plate to be clearly captured, and the vehicle could not be identified. The gate

arm sustained significant damage to the mounting bracket and was rendered inoperable.

Sept. 7

A non-resident responded to RMCS D Dispatch to report a purse belonging to her daughter as lost or possibly stolen from a nearby restaurant. The reporting party advised that the purse contained AirPods and that she was tracking their location through a mobile device. At the reporting party’s request, Patrol accompanied her to Magno Court, where the tracking information indicated the property might be located. The reporting party contacted occupants at two residences and requested permission to check the respective backyard areas. The purse was not located. The reporting party was provided with the North and South Gate telephone numbers in the event the purse was turned in to RMCS D Lost and Found.

Sept. 8

3:42 a.m., While on patrol, Patrol observed an adult male walking eastbound along Highway 16. The subject was described as approximately 5’6”, average build, with long hair and a beard, wearing blue jeans, a blue coat and carrying a blue backpack. Patrol staged in the

RMCS D parking lot and monitored the subject due to his proximity to the South Gate entrance. Patrol contacted the subject and determined he was not a Rancho Murieta resident. The subject was advised that Rancho Murieta is a gated community and private property. The subject continued eastbound on Highway 16 and was heard yelling while walking along the roadway. Patrol subsequently staged near a vulnerable section of the perimeter fence to ensure the subject did not attempt to enter the community.

Sept. 11

10:54 p.m., Patrol located a group of juveniles at Gazebo Park after established park hours. The group was also observed in an area containing litter. Patrol contacted the juveniles, advised them of the park-hours violation and directed them to clean up the litter and leave the area. The group was in violation of Rule IX, Section 2-Park Hours, and citations were issued. As the group departed, one juvenile ran after a moving Toyota Tacoma and jumped into the bed of the vehicle.

Sept. 14

5:52 p.m., A resident arrived at South Gate reporting he was lost. Patrol escorted the resident home, where he safely gained entry. ★

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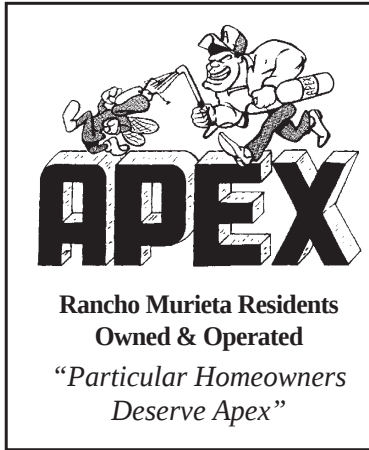


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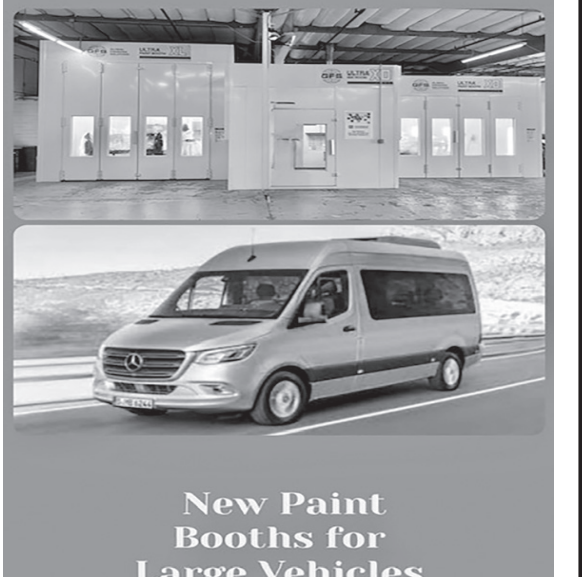
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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Music Mike Returns to Lake Clementia

Music Mike returns to the Lake Clementia Amphitheater Sunday, Sept. 27 for an evening of music and activities for children and families. Music Mike will entertain children with familiar songs while leading them in singing and movement activities. The music begins promptly at 5 p.m.

The free event is open to Rancho Murieta families and their guests and is sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Rancho Murieta as its annual Music Mike Concert.

Community Invited to Beer, Brats & Bingo

Please join us for a Beer, Brats & Bingo night on Saturday October 17 in the social hall at St. Vincent De Paul church. Enjoy a buffet of bratwurst, hotdogs, potato salad, sauerkraut, green salad and dessert. Doors open at 6 p.m. with a no-host bar, dinner at 6:30 p.m. and bingo at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$25 per adult, \$15 per child under 12.

Admission includes two bingo cards.

Ticket sales start the weekend of Sept. 26 and 27 and can be purchased before and after all Masses. Or contact Karen Mauro at 916 461-3286.

Home Hardening Booth Planned at Summerfest

Hardening homes against wildfires will be the thrust when the South County Fire Safe Council operates a booth at Summerfest in Stonehouse Park on Oct. 2 and Oct. 3. The carnival hours are from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. on Friday and from noon to 11 p.m. on Saturday.

The fire safe council event is being aligned with National Fire Prevention Week. Volunteers will provide information on home hardening projects to attendees who are interested in making their homes more fire-resistant.

They also will hand out emergency kit swag and other fire safety materials. Although Summerfest doesn't allow booths at the annual event, it made an

exception this year because of the importance of the topic, according to Board President Sherry Carrillo.

Community Invited to Van Halen Tribute

The community is invited to a concert by Atomic Punks, A Tribute to the Early Van Halen Band, at 8 p.m. Oct. 7 at Rancho Murieta Country Club. Tickets are \$35 or \$20 for members and \$30 for non-members. Tickets are on sale at the club, Barcode Barbers and Ace Hardware.

The event will raise money for Terrace Patio improvements. David Lee Roth, the original lead vocalist and flamboyant frontman of Van Halen, has been quoted as naming the Atomic Punks as "the best tribute to Van Halen ever."

Bookmobile Changes Rancho Murieta Schedule

The Sacramento Public Library Mobile Services, formerly known as the Bookmobile, has changed its Rancho

Murieta schedule and will now visit on the first and third Wednesdays of each month from 10 a.m. to noon outside the Murieta Village Clubhouse. The Bookmobile will offer a Halloween Storytime at the Clubhouse at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday, Oct. 21.

During warmer or inclement weather, books and other materials will be available inside the Clubhouse. Residents can obtain library cards, reserve materials online and pick up books, audiobooks and DVDs for children and adults. A Seed Library featuring flower and herb seeds is also currently available.

Wilton Bingo Oct. 3

The next Wilton Bingo will be on Saturday, Oct. 3 in the Wilton Community Center. Doors open at 5 p.m. with food available for sale and Bingo starts at 6 p.m. All proceeds go to two nonprofits: the local Park Council and the Wilton History Group. 9717 Colony Road at Dillard Road, Wilton. ★

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RMA Cites Ex-Director for Skating with Dog

Continued from page 1

person, animal or property.

The notice, which was issued to Carrillo and his wife Sherry Luman-Carrillo, did not impose a fine. It warned, however, that another violation of the same kind within 12 months could result in a proposed \$100 fine. Carrillo has filed a written appeal, which the Compliance Committee will consider on Oct. 7.

Their appeal said the description of a person tethered to a dog by a leash while riding a skateboard in the notice wasn't accurate.

"Danny was riding a motorized skateboard while holding a dog's leash in hand. At no point was the dog, the leash, or the person attached or tethered to the skateboard – or to one another by any means other than a hand-held leash," they wrote. "Additionally, Leo was not towing the skateboard."

The River Valley Times asked RMA what prompted the notice and why the rule was being enforced against Carrillo after years of the same activity. The newspaper also asked whether RMA had previously enforced the rule against Carrillo or other residents riding bicycles, skateboards or scooters while attached to an animal.

General Manager Vicky Lentz declined to address those questions.

"RMA respects the privacy of its members and does not comment on, discuss, or disclose matters involving individual compliance notices, enforcement actions, or resident account information," Lentz wrote.

She said RMA has a policy of not responding to questions involving specific residents or alleged violations.

Residents Question Enforcement

Three residents who responded to River Valley Times inquiries questioned why Carrillo was cited after years of skateboarding through the community with his dogs.

Don Ogden, who said he served on the RMA Compliance Committee for several years, recalled the committee discussing the rule several years ago. Carrillo was already riding his skateboard with Leo at the time, Ogden said, while some residents were walking their dogs from golf carts.

"We did not see these as issues needing attention or enforcement," Ogden said.

He said the committee concentrated instead on making sure electric bicycles did not exceed speed limits and that riders obeyed traffic rules.

Kim Doughty said she has seen Carrillo skateboarding with Leo for years and disputed the notice's description of the dog as tethered to the skateboard.

She also questioned whether association rules are being applied consistently, saying she sees residents pulling dogs tethered to golf carts and children riding scooters through stop signs.

Myrna Solomon said it was ludicrous that Carrillo was cited.

"I have watched him go up and down the street with his awesome dog for years and years," she said. "I've never had a problem with that."

Previous Conflict with Board

Carrillo resigned from the RMA board in August 2025 after a public rift with fellow directors. He said he had been improperly excluded from executive-session discussions after being accused of disclosing, or threatening to disclose, confidential information. Carrillo denied the accusations.

Board members said they acted on legal advice but could not publicly reveal the underlying details because they were confidential.

Carrillo later criticized the board for declining to consider his proposal for a committee devoted to leadership training, communication and transparency. ★

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Entertainment, Theatre & Culture for Rancho Murieta

Summerfest Returns to Stonehouse Park Oct. 2 and 3

By Gail Bullen
River Valley Times
Reporter

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - The annual Summerfest Carnival will return to Stonehouse Park in Rancho Murieta on Friday and Saturday, Oct. 2 and 3.

The community tradition will offer carnival rides, games, food trucks, live music and activities for children and adults. The event is open only to Rancho Murieta residents and their guests.

Tickets, tournament registration and additional information are available at summerfest-rancho-murieta.org.

Gates open at 5 p.m. Friday for Family Fun Night. New this year is a character meet-and-greet from 6 to 8 p.m., giving children an opportunity to take photographs with some of their favorite movie characters.

An adult Trivia Night will also be held from 6 to 8 p.m. Participants must be at least 18 and register in advance through the Summerfest website.

Adam Aldama & The Aces will take the stage from 8 to 11 p.m. with a tribute to Bruno Mars. Aldama, a Sacramento singer, musician and producer, fronts the band performing Mars' hits.

Saturday's activities begin when the carnival opens at noon. The schedule includes a petting zoo from noon to 4 p.m., Bingo and a poker tournament at 1 p.m., and a cornhole tournament at 5 p.m. Advance registration



A popular Bruno Mars tribute band that delighted attendees last year is slated to return to this year's Summerfest. File photo by Gail Bullen

at the Summerfest website is required for the poker and cornhole tournaments. Cornhole participants must be at least 18.

DJ Louie Giovanni will provide music from 8 to 11 p.m. Saturday.

The event will also feature a special informational booth from the South Fire Safe Council, offering "little freebies" while focusing primarily on home-hardening tips and fire safety information for residents. Although organizers typically do not allow booths at Summerfest, Board President Sherry Carrillo said they made an exception this year because the fire-safety education is "something important for the community" and Summerfest is "the perfect place for it."

Food trucks will be on site both days. Friday's lineup includes Street

Philly Food, Smokin' Ewe BBQ, Gameday Grill, Bangin' Churro Bar and Taco Girl Food. Saturday's vendors include WildFire Pizza, The Fry Boys, Taco Girl Food, Allen BBQ & Burgers, and The Mini Donut Shack.

The Summerfest bar will be cashless this year, accepting debit and credit cards, Apple Pay and Google Pay.

Raley's is the title sponsor of this year's Summerfest. Although it is not open to the general public, a sponsors-only Wine Gala will be held from 5:30 to 10 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 1. The "Yacht Rock Revival" evening will include food, wine, carnival rides and music by the Yacht Rockers tribute band.

Daily Summerfest wristbands are \$35 when purchased online and \$40

at the gate. An online-only family four-pack is available for \$120, a \$20 savings.

Children 4 and younger are admitted free. Online service and transaction fees apply.

Wristbands cover carnival rides and activities but do not include carnival games, carnival food, food trucks or alcoholic beverages.

Friday wristbands that have not been used may be exchanged for Saturday wristbands, but refunds will not be issued.

Summerfest has adopted a new bag policy this year. Backpacks and large bags will not be permitted. Only clear bags, clear backpacks and small purses will be allowed. Diaper bags, purses and strollers are subject to search. Outside food, drinks and alcohol are prohibited.

Summerfest was formed in the late 1990s by Rancho Murieta residents seeking more recreational facilities and family activities for the community. The nonprofit organization has raised more than \$1 million, including donated services, for educational and recreational projects benefiting Rancho Murieta youth and families.

2026 Summerfest Schedule
Thursday, Oct. 1 – Sponsors only
5:30 p.m. – Wine Gala begins
Live music by Yacht Rockers
10 p.m. – Gala ends
Friday, Oct. 2 – Family Fun Night
5 p.m. – Carnival gates open
Food trucks: Street Philly Food, Smokin' Ewe BBQ, Gameday Grill,

Bangin' Churro Bar and Taco Girl Food
6 to 8 p.m. – Adult Trivia Night; advance registration required
6 to 8 p.m. – Character meet-and-greet
8 to 11 p.m. – Adam Aldama & The Aces
11 p.m. – Gates close
Saturday, Oct. 3
Noon – Carnival gates open
Food trucks: WildFire Pizza, The Fry Boys, Taco Girl Food, Allen BBQ & Burgers and The Mini Donut Shack
Noon to 4 p.m. – Petting zoo
1 p.m. – Bingo
1 p.m. – Poker tournament; advance registration required
5 p.m. – Cornhole tournament; advance registration required
8 to 11 p.m. – DJ Louie Giovanni
11 p.m. – Gates close ★



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