

Tourney Celebrates Past Captains

PAGE **3**

Social Media Posts Controversy

PAGE **10**



RIVER VALLEY TIMES

42ND YEAR • ISSUE **21** | *Serving Rancho Murieta, Sloughhouse, Wilton* | NOVEMBER 6, **2026**

SEE INSIDE

DISTRICT FAILING TO RESPOND



PAGE **2**

WILTON TO RECOGNIZE VETERANS



PAGE **11**

WHAT'S COOKING IN CALIFORNIA SCHOOLS?



PAGE **8**

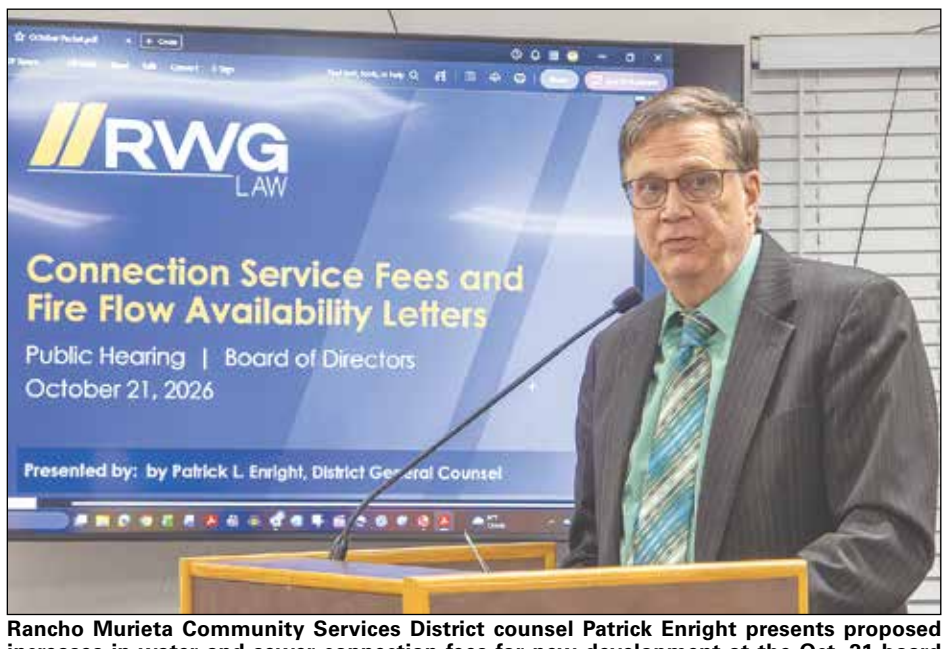
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Developer Fees to Increase

Board Discusses Water Issues, Too

Story and photos by Gail Bullen



Rancho Murieta Community Services District counsel Patrick Enright presents proposed increases in water and sewer connection fees for new development at the Oct. 21 board meeting. The board unanimously approved the increases.

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - The Rancho Murieta Community Services District Board approved higher connection fees for new development, agreed to seek preliminary legal guidance on expanding Lake Clementia's water uses and heard at its Oct. 21 meeting that a surplus of treated wastewater has been reduced.

The board also addressed two contentious issues — misleading social media posts about district matters and the board's longstanding practice of not responding to written correspondence from the public. Both topics are covered in separate stories in this issue.

Connection Fees Increase

The board voted unanimously to increase water and sewer connection fees for new development and establish a new fee for fire flow availability letters. The changes take effect Dec. 20 and will not affect existing customers unless they request a new connection or related service.

District counsel Patrick Enright said the fees, last updated in 2017, no longer cover the district's costs due to increased labor, materials, and inspection requirements.

The water meter installation fee will increase from $522 to $926, while water connection and sewer lateral inspection fees will each rise from $165 to $547. A new $613 fee will cover the cost of fire flow availability letters, which the district currently provides without charge.

The combined fees for a typical new home will be about $2,600, including the fire flow letter.

Enright said the increases are intended to ensure that new development pays the actual cost of connection services rather than having those costs subsidized by existing ratepayers. State law prohibits the district from charging more than the

Continued on page 4

An Early Halloween



A high school volunteer ushers a group of fifth graders onto the outdoor stage for the costume contest, a highlight of the Harvest Festival Oct. 23 sponsored by the Cosumnes River Elementary School PTA.

Story and photos by Gail Bullen

SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG) - An estimated 400 children and adults turned out for the annual Harvest Festival at Cosumnes River Elementary School on Oct. 23, where three new activities joined traditional favorites for an evening of Halloween fun organized by the school's PTA.

The additions included Trunk or Treat, a pumpkin-decorating contest called Pumpkin Palooza, and a silent auction featuring experiences donated by teachers. Returning attractions included the popular costume contest, Haunted Hallway, cakewalk, face painting, and carnival games.

"I believe the Harvest Festival was a hit this year!" said PTA President Christine Walker. "We lucked out with great weather, our volunteers were amazing, and the kids seemed to really enjoy it."

Unlike some school events, the festival was not intended to raise money.

"This year, the CRES PTA chose for this not to be a fundraiser," Walker said. "The intent was to bring the families and friends of Cosumnes River Elementary together to kick off the fall season and enjoy time together outside of class."

One of the new attractions, Trunk or Treat, featured vehicles decorated for Halloween, with candy for youngsters. Walker credited Laura McCrary with taking the lead after Michelle Mazzola brought the idea to a PTA board meeting.

"We agreed it would be a fun way to get more families involved and give the kids another activity alongside the harvest games," Walker said.

A Peter Pan-themed trunk won the decorating contest.

The Pumpkin Palooza was another new activity, made possible by Davis Ranch, which donated the pumpkins. CRES students received vouchers to pick up their pumpkins at the ranch,

Continued on page 4

Board Approves Dues Increase

Story and photo by Gail Bullen

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - Rancho Murieta Association members will pay an additional $4.50 per month in dues next year under a 2027 budget unanimously approved by the RMA Board at its Oct. 6 meeting.

The 2.59% increase amounts to $54 annually.

The additional revenue will help maintain existing services, support the community's Fourth of July fireworks celebration and finance security fencing along the North Gate perimeter.

The original proposal called for a $4.95 monthly increase, including $1.10 to maintain existing services, $0.17 for fireworks, and $3.68 for perimeter security improvements.

Accounting Manager Colleen Hagyard recommended reducing the proposed increase by 45 cents, with the difference added to the budget's projected loss.

Last year, the board approved a $5.1 million operating budget for 2026, with a reported $8 monthly dues increase.

Although the board approved the budget, the total amount of spending authorized for 2027 was not discussed during the meeting.

In response to a request from the River Valley Times for the 2027 budget total and the monthly assessment for 2027, General Manager Vicky Lentz said the association would not release the figures to the newspaper at this time.

"The Association will be mailing this information directly to the membership, and we believe it is important that our members receive and review the information before it is disseminated outside of the membership," Lentz wrote in an Oct. 23 email.

The association did not specify when the information would be mailed.

Board President Patrick O'Hern praised Hagyard for her careful oversight of association finances, noting that the association has kept dues increases modest in recent years.

Security improvements

The North Gate perimeter fencing project accounts for the largest portion of the proposed dues increase.

O'Hern said gaps in the existing fencing allow unauthorized individuals to enter and leave the community, creating safety concerns and increasing the workload of security and compliance personnel.

The association previously used existing funds to finance South Gate

Continued on page 7

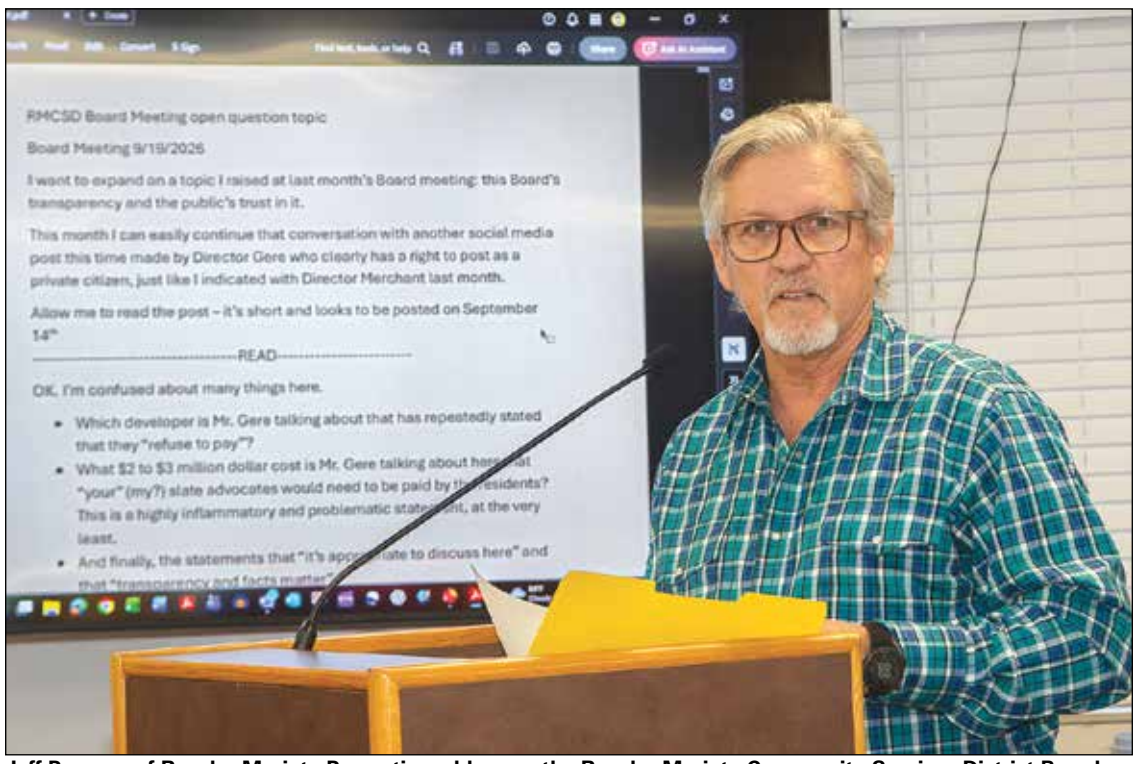
District Failing to Respond

Story and photos by Gail Bullen

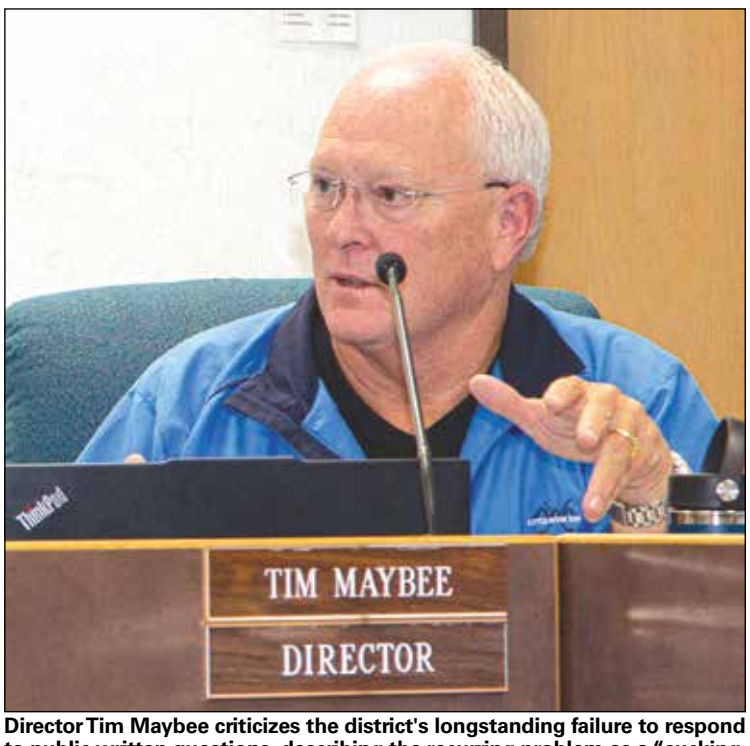
RANCH MURIETA, CA (MPG) - Tim Maybee, Rancho Murieta Community Services District director, expressed frustration at the Oct. 21 board meeting over the district's failure to respond to public written questions, describing the recurring problem as a "sucking, swirly eddy of despair."

"We're back in November, we're back in December, and we're stuck in the sucky, swirly eddy of despair of not answering," Maybee said.

The discussion arose during the "Correspondence" agenda items after Jeff Pearson of Rancho Murieta Properties read a summary of his Oct. 21 letter challenging statements Director Bill Gere had made on social media about who would pay for additional water supplies needed for future development. (See the separate story in this issue about the use of social media and a second story about other topics discussed.)



Jeff Pearson of Rancho Murieta Properties addresses the Rancho Murieta Community Services District Board on Oct. 21, referring to his written comments displayed on a monitor across the room.



Director Tim Maybee criticizes the district's longstanding failure to respond to public written questions, describing the recurring problem as a "sucking, swirly eddy of despair."

Although "Correspondence" is a standing agenda item and submitted letters are included in the board packet, Board President John Merchant and his predecessors have generally acknowledged receiving correspondence without discussing its contents before moving to the next agenda item.

Pearson upended this standard operating procedure on Oct. 21 by submitting a request to comment under "Correspondence."

Pearson summarized his current letter to the board and said he had submitted questions previously without receiving a response. "I don't want to continue to come back up here and do this," Pearson said.

Maybee questioned why the district had not responded to questions Pearson had previously submitted in writing. "Why in the heck aren't the questions getting answered?" Maybee asked.

District legal counsel Patrick Enright said he does not routinely answer every question submitted to him.

"If the board wants to direct that we give answers, that I give an answer, then I'll do the research and give the answer," Enright said.

He questioned whether the directors wanted the district to incur his $300-per-hour rate to research every inquiry.

Maybee argued that the district should not have to pay its attorney to answer straightforward questions arising from statements made by an individual director.

The discussion broadened when Maybee asked whether staff had responded to two other pieces of correspondence in the Oct. 21 board packet. They included a September letter from C.A. Adkins and a letter from Nellie Bloom, which he said was nearly two months old.

Maybee suggested that, at a minimum, the district should acknowledge receipt of written correspondence, even when it does not provide a substantive response.

General Manager Marti Brown, who began work Oct. 19, recommended the board consider adopting a policy establishing how staff should respond to correspondence.

Brown said staff needs clear direction from the board rather than deciding themselves which letters should receive responses.

"I would prefer that the board take explicit action, giving us direction to start responding to things in a factual way that's unemotional and, hopefully, just the facts," Brown said.

She offered to bring the matter to the board for consideration in November.

Director Randy Jenco said he recalled an earlier board discussion establishing a procedure for responding to questions raised during public comment. Under that approach, he said, directors would not answer questions immediately but would respond after the meeting.

"I think what you're asking for has already been done, and the ball was dropped on these three correspondents when no one responded to them," Jenco said.

Brown said she would review the earlier meeting minutes.

During former General Manager Mimi Morris's tenure, the district established a section on its website to answer questions raised at board meetings—the posted responses address questions from a 2023 meeting, with no subsequent responses appearing in that section.

Merchant also described his experience with unanswered correspondence. Between 2006 and 2016, he said, he submitted numerous detailed memoranda to the board, primarily concerning water use and planning documents, without receiving a single acknowledgment or formal response.

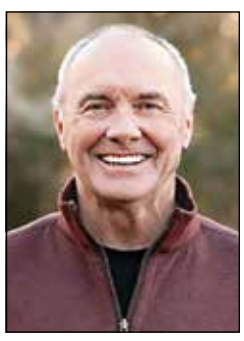
The board took no formal action on a correspondence-response policy at the Oct. 21 meeting. ★

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Tourney Celebrates Past Captains

Story and photos by Nancy Clevenger

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - On Oct. 20, in perfect cool autumn weather, 48 players, including eight captains of the Rancho Murieta Women's Golf Club (RMWGC), took to the North Course of Rancho Murieta Country Club to celebrate all who served as the leader of the group through the years in the annual Captain/Past Captains Tournament.

After the 18-hole round of golf and a buffet luncheon, filled with the friendly energy of reunited acquaintances, the club held an awards ceremony. Thirteen captains participated in the day. Some golfed while others cheered their comrades on to the next great shot. Margaret Neiderberger, captain of RMWGC in 2001, traveled from North Carolina to visit former captain and good friend Marilyn Lauver (captain in 2008) and joined in the festivities.

The golfing scramble event included 48 golfers in two separate flights. All players thrived in the refreshing weather. Awards were presented to the first flight team that ended the 18-hole competition in first place with a net score of 19 strokes under par 72. That team included players Cindy Doty, Rene Lewis, Peggy-Gear Miller, and Bonnie Shewchuck. First place in flight two at a net 16 strokes under par 72 was the team of Beverly Carr-Barrow, Ann Coeur, Doris Hanson (captain of RMWGC in 2005), and Ashlye Sheilds.

More awards were handed out to those golfers who landed their drive closest to the hole on a par three. Landing her ball from the tee only four feet, 11 inches away from the pin on hole No. 2 was Sunny Robinson. Naomi Cook drove her ball to only six feet, 11 inches away from the flag on hole No. 6.

This annual event brings together friends to golf with the past leaders of the group, enjoying memories and good times. It is an event that is alway highly anticipated.

Those interested in joining RMWGC may call Captain Kris Trigales at 916-267-4801 or call Rancho Murieta Country Club at 916-354-3400. The Women's Club is open to all lady golfers who are golfing members of Rancho Murieta Country Club. ★



The following women are past captains of the Rancho Murieta Women's Golf Club. Back row from left, El Louise Waldron (Captain 2016), Doris Hanson (2005), Melody Hayes (2024), Patty Favero (2019), Georgella Burnette-Ellis (2023), Joanna Graf (2022), Jan Valine (2025), Kris Trigales (2026). Front row from left, Connie Heimbecker (1998), Marilyn Lauver (2008), Nan Parquette (2003), Margaret Niederberger (2001), Diane Raggio (2009)



The following are the flight one winners from the 2026 Captains/Past Captains Tournament. From left, Rene Lewis, Peggie Miller-Gear, Cindy Doty, Bonnie Shewchuck



The following are the flight two winner from the 2026 Captains/Past Captains Tournament. From left, Ann Coeur, Doris Hanson (past captain), Beverly Carr-Barrow, Ashlye Sheilds.

Election Results on RVT Website

By Gail Bullen

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - Results of the closely watched Rancho Murieta Community Services District board election will be posted on the River Valley Times website, therivervalleytimes.com, as they become available following the Nov. 3 election.

Four of the district's five board seats are on the ballot, with 10 candidates competing for three four-year terms and one two-year term.

The election has generated considerable interest in Rancho Murieta, with water supplies, future development, district finances and board leadership among the major issues.

The campaign has also sparked heated discussion on social media, particularly Nextdoor, where residents, candidates and their supporters have expressed different opinions about the district's future. Exchanges have included personal criticism of candidates, competing claims about their records and disagreements over what is at stake in the election.

The River Valley Times will post election results as Sacramento County election officials release them and update vote totals as additional ballots are counted.

Election night totals are unofficial, and close races may remain undecided for days or weeks as county officials complete the ballot count and certify the results.

Visit therivervalleytimes.com for election updates. ★

Committee Upholds Skateboarding Violation

By Gail Bullen

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - The Rancho Murieta Association Compliance Committee upheld a rule violation issued to former RMA Director Danny Carrillo for riding his skateboard through the community with his dog Leo.

Carrillo and his wife, Sherry Luman-Carrillo, plan to appeal the decision to the RMA Board of Directors during its Nov. 17 executive session.

In an Oct. 9 letter, RMA Compliance notified the couple the committee upheld the violation following an Oct. 7 hearing. No fine was imposed.

The original Aug. 28 notice alleged that Carrillo violated an RMA rule prohibiting a person from riding a skateboard, bicycle or scooter while tethered to another person, animal or property.

Carrillo disputes the allegation, maintaining that he was holding Leo's leash in his hand and was not tethered to the dog.

Carrillo, who served nearly five years on the RMA board before resigning in August 2025, said he had skateboarded with his dogs through the community for more than a decade without receiving a warning.

Sherry Luman-Carrillo said the couple believes the rule is being enforced selectively and intends to challenge the committee's decision.

The couple also plans to attend the board's regular meeting Nov. 17, beginning at 6:30 p.m. at the RMA Building. ★

An Early Halloween



Checking out the competition is part of the fun as costumed youngsters await the results of the Harvest Festival costume contest for their grade level.



Della Robarts stands her ground in front of the fearsome "Monster Mouth," one of the decorated vehicles featured in the new Trunk or Treat activity.



When Theo Johnson announced that he wanted to dress as his pediatrician for Halloween, his parents rose to the challenge, complete with surgical scrubs, a white coat and a stethoscope.

Continued from page 1

then decorated them at home for the contest.

The rules encouraged creativity, whether spooky, silly, cute, or traditional, but prohibited carving. The decorated pumpkins were displayed at the festival, where 10 winners were selected from many entries.

The third addition was a silent auction featuring donations from teachers, offering students opportunities for special experiences with their educators.

Meanwhile, the school's outdoor areas were filled with traditional Harvest Festival activities. Children tested their skills at Halloween-themed carnival games organized by grade-level committees, including a Monster Toss game provided by fourth-grade families. Students and families from first through fifth grades created and operated the other harvest games.

Transitional kindergarten and kindergarten families managed the cakewalk, while sixth-grade families handled face painting.

Inside the Haunted Hallway, spooky decorations and animatronics provided thrills for visitors. Walker thanked Christopher Holmes for his work with the animatronics and Thomas Xenos for helping with the attraction and continuing to donate Halloween decorations.

The costume contest was another highlight, with youngsters taking to the outdoor stage to show off their Halloween outfits.

"I loved seeing all the kids smiling, laughing, and playing in their costumes," Walker said. "My favorite part was watching how proud each kiddo was coming on stage in their costumes."

DJVEEZAY provided music for the evening. The PTA also offered kettle corn, and Ayahz Coffee served specialty drinks.

The Murieta Dance Company Junior Competition Team also performed a routine to “If I Be Wrong,” which will be featured in the company’s annual December recital.

More than 50 volunteers helped make the festival possible, Walker added.

She singled out PTA Vice President Michelle Mazzola, the event coordinator, for the hours she spent planning and organizing the activities.

Kiwanis Club members welcomed guests and operated the popcorn stand, while Evergood Merchandise provided lighting for the evening. Walker thanked Davis Ranch for its pumpkin donation and the parents, students, staff members, and community volunteers who contributed.

"I'd really like to highlight that evenings like this create memories our children will have forever," Walker said. "I am so thankful for the volunteers and staff who help us pull this together year after year."

More photos from the Harvest Festival can be viewed at therivervalleytimes.com. ★



Judges Kirstyn Boll (left) and Michelle Mazzola examine the colorful entries in Pumpkin Palooza, a new pumpkin decorating contest at the Harvest Festival.

Developer Fees to Increase

Continued from page 1

cost of providing the services. The fees will be reviewed annually.

Lake Clementia

The board agreed to seek preliminary legal guidance on using Lake Clementia as a drinking-water source while preserving recreational activities, including swimming.

Director Randy Jenco brought the issue to the board following an Oct. 7 Improvements Committee discussion. He said the district needed legal advice to determine what permit changes and possible state legislation would be required to allow both uses.

Director Bill Gere supported moving forward but emphasized the need to define the scope and cost of the legal work before committing to a more extensive study.

Director Linda Butler opposed assigning additional work to the district's water attorney, saying the attorney should concentrate on ongoing litigation. She also favored waiting until the district had more clearly defined its objectives and hired an operations director.

Gere disagreed, arguing that preliminary legal guidance would help the district identify its options without committing to a comprehensive study.

Board President John Merchant suggested the district explore another approach before going to the state water board: using Clementia water for golf course irrigation while directing treated recycled wastewater into Lake Calero for potential future drinking-water use. He suggested that permitting Clementia for irrigation might be less complicated than converting it directly to a drinking-water reservoir.

Former CSD director and current board candidate Steve Booth, speaking during public comment, noted the unusual agreement among people who often disagree on district issues.

“It's not frequent that I find myself in agreement with Mr. Jenco, Mr. Shewchuk and Mr. Martell, but this is one of those issues,” Booth said.

He urged the board to ask the water attorney to explore all potential uses of Clementia, including the costs and time required, rather than continue delaying a decision.

“I think that this is one of those topics where analysis has become paralysis,” Booth said. “My God, when are we going to be ready to pose that question? I think now is the time.”

New General Manager Marti Brown said the district's water attorney was already scheduled to address the board in December. She offered to ask the attorney to include Clementia's potential uses, regulatory requirements and possible next steps in that presentation.

The board agreed by consensus to pursue that approach without authorizing a separate legal study.



Former CSD director and current board candidate Steve Booth urges the board, on Oct. 21, to move forward with exploring changes to Lake Clementia's permits that would allow it to be used for drinking water.

Excess Wastewater

The district has largely eliminated its excess treated wastewater, reducing storage to approximately 50 million gallons, just 15 million gallons above normal levels.

At the July board meeting, interim Operations Director Travis Bohannon warned of an overabundance of treated wastewater following a two-month shutdown of the wastewater treatment plant for upgrades. The district faced the challenge of disposing of the excess before the rainy season, when the demand for irrigation water ends.

Bohannon reported Oct. 21 that the district had substantially reduced the surplus by supplying as much recycled water as possible to Rancho Murieta Country Club's golf courses and Van Vleck Ranch.

“My staff did a fantastic job keeping things going,” Bohannon said. “Van Vleck got a lot of water, which he was happy about. Art got his water, and so we were able to make up that overabundance from last year.”

Other Business

The board voted to terminate the emergency declaration for repairs to the Murieta Equestrian Center culvert. Enright said the repairs were complete. Equestrian representative Jeff Pearson praised the finished project, saying it looked good, and the work appeared to have been done properly.

The district expects to have its financial records for the overdue 2024-25 audit ready for the auditors in December, according to Finance Director Cecilia Min. However, she cautioned that the auditors might not be able to begin their work immediately.



General Manager, Marti Brown participates in her first board meeting Oct. 21, two days after starting her new job.

Board Secretary Amelia Wilder reported that the district is adding an AT&T cellular backup system that will automatically take over when its primary internet service fails. A previous outage disrupted office operations and the gate security system for about 2½ days.

Wilder also said the district is upgrading its boardroom audiovisual equipment, including installing a camera that will automatically focus on speakers. The goal is to make recordings of board meetings available online. Installation is expected to take two months.

The board nominated Brown to serve on the board of the Golden State Risk Management Authority, which provides insurance coverage to the district. Brown said she previously served five years on the risk management board when she was the city manager in Willows. Her eligibility to serve remains subject to confirmation under the authority's rules. ★

Jackie White Settles in as Sacramento County Superintendent

New Superintendent Reflects on Her Journey and Vision for Public Education

Sacramento County Office of Education News Release



Jacqueline "Jackie" White was sworn in Sacramento County Superintendent of Schools on Sept. 1, becoming the first woman to hold the position in more than a century. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County Office of Education

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Jacqueline "Jackie" White celebrated a historic milestone during her Sept. 1 swearing-in ceremony as Sacramento County Superintendent of Schools, becoming the first woman to hold the position in more than a century.

Surrounded by family, friends, educators and community leaders, White reflected on the people who helped shape her journey, her more than 20 years in public education, and her hopes for the students and communities she now serves.

The occasion marked a new chapter in a career that began in the classroom, where White taught fifth and sixth grades in the Twin Rivers Unified School District. She subsequently served as a principal, district administrator and assistant superintendent at the Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE), overseeing programs ranging from career technical education and adult education to services for some of the county's most vulnerable students.

For White, the journey has been both professional and deeply personal.

She spoke warmly about her family, particularly her two grandmothers, one a school secretary and the other a science teacher, whose influence helped shape her life and commitment to education.

"They gave me both roots and wings," White said, reflecting on the generations who helped make the moment possible.

White also paid tribute to her predecessor, David W. Gordon, who served as county superintendent for more than two decades and whose career in education spans more than 50 years.

"You are a leader among leaders and have always modeled grace, compassion and kindness," she told Gordon, thanking him for his guidance and generosity during the transition.

The ceremony also featured a spoken-word presentation by Patrice Hill, a longtime educator, poet and director of Sacramento Area Youth Speaks, whose message of hope, resilience and collective responsibility reflected the spirit of the occasion.

"Together as community, embracing transformative leadership, we will light the way. We will fight for education and a brighter day," Hill told those gathered.

Her presentation, built around the theme "Futures Forward," emphasized the importance of working together to overcome challenges and create opportunities for future generations.

While recognizing the significance of becoming the first woman to serve as county superintendent since Minnie O'Neill held the position from 1907 to 1914, White emphasized that her attention is firmly on the future.

She acknowledged the challenges confronting public education, including declining enrollment, financial pressures and rapidly changing technology. But her message was one of optimism, determination and shared responsibility.

"We must stand resolute, arm in arm, knowing our children deserve the best we can give them," White said. "We must dream for them. We must work for them."

White emphasized that meeting those challenges will require schools, families and communities to work together, listening to students, expanding educational opportunities and strengthening the support systems that help young people succeed.

Her vision extends beyond academic achievement to preparing students for college, careers and meaningful participation in their communities.

Throughout the evening, White returned to the importance of the people who supported her journey and the collective effort needed to improve public education.

"It is with great humility that I recognize there is no me without all of you," she said.

As she begins her tenure, White hopes to build on Sacramento County's educational accomplishments while ensuring that every student has the opportunity to succeed.

Her goal is straightforward but ambitious: creating the conditions for every student in the Sacramento region to "belong, learn, lead and thrive."

"That is the work. That is the opportunity," White said. "And it is an honor to do that work with all of you."

The swearing-in ceremony can be viewed online at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F-WiwuzFHbaE. ★

Health Forum Focuses on Detection

By Kevin Ruse

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - Shortly after attending an employer-sponsored health screening event, Andrew Cope received a phone call advising him of his APOE status. Andrew was told he had two copies of the APOE4 gene. This rare genetic profile, which occurs in only about 2-5% of the general population, represents the strongest known genetic factor for developing late-onset Alzheimer's disease. What followed, for Mr. Cope, a natural researcher, was an in-depth study of what his future might hold, all while navigating primary care, neurologists, clinics, and additional testing.

How many of us have wondered how we would feel and what we would do if we received similar information? Does having a family history increase my risk? How can I find out? Are treatment options available today? Who will take care of me, and how?

These questions and many more will be addressed at the 11th Annual Brain Health Forum to be held on Friday, Nov. 13 from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the Carmichael Elks Lodge #2103 at 5631 Cypress Avenue, Carmichael, CA 95608.

This year's theme is: "This Is Our Mammogram Moment." Just as mammograms transformed early detection and outcomes for breast cancer, advances in early detection and treatment are creating new opportunities for patients and families with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia.

This year's forum will focus on exciting advances in Alzheimer's early detection, including blood-based testing, new treatment options and practical information for families navigating the challenges of caregiving. From 9:30 a.m. to 10 a.m., resource tables will provide valuable information for caregivers, including help with meals, transportation, home safety and respite care.



Andrew Cope thanks Assemblymember Catherine Stefani at San Francisco's Walk to End Alzheimer's for supporting SB 950's expanded treatment coverage and reduced step-therapy barriers for people with Alzheimer's and other memory conditions. Photo courtesy of Kevin Ruse

Attendees will have the opportunity to speak with representatives from Dignity Health, Sutter Health, UC Davis, the Greater Sacramento Women's Brain Health (GROW) Program, Del Oro Caregiver Resource Center, the Alzheimer's Disease Research Center, Veterans Administration and more.

From 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., the forum will feature a variety of presenters including Dr. Shawn J.Kile, a neurologist who specializes in cognitive disorders including Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. Claire Day, Chief Mission and Program Strategy Officer for the Alzheimer's Association Northern California and Northern Nevada Chapter, will speak about the U.S. POINTER lifestyle interventions shown to support cognitive health. Also presenting will be Andrew Cope, who will share his personal story and perspective on the importance of early detection and timely access to treatment.

Whether you're concerned about your own brain health, caring for a loved one or simply interested in the latest advances in Alzheimer's research, this free community event offers an opportunity to learn, ask questions, and connect with valuable local resources.

The 11th Annual Brain Health Forum is presented by the Alzheimer's Association of Northern California and Congressman Ami Bera, M.D. You can register for this free event at https://bera.house.gov/events/brainhealthforum or call 1-800-272-3900. The Brain Health Forum is free of charge. Light refreshments will be served along with giveaway prizes. ★

Weekday Closures of Freeport Bridge in November



During the closures, detour signs will direct travelers south of the project where they can cross at the Paintersville Bridge. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County

Sacramento County News Release

SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG) - The Sacramento County Department of Transportation (SacDOT) will conduct full weekday closures of the Freeport Bridge between Highway 160 and South River Road throughout the month of November.

The Freeport Bridge is about a mile south of the Cosumnes River Blvd on the east side of the Sacramento River and approximately four miles north of Clarksburg on the west side of the river. The bridge connects South River Road in Yolo County with Highway 160 in Sacramento County.

SacDOT is closing the bridge for repair work. Detours will be set up during the weekday closures. The closures will run Monday through Friday from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., Nov. 2 through Nov. 30.

The bridge will reopen to traffic each evening and remain open Saturdays and Sundays.

During the closures, detour signs will direct travelers south of the project where they can cross at the Paintersville Bridge. Traveler on the east side of the Sacramento River can take River Road/ Highway 160 to the Paintersville Bridge and drivers on the west side of the Sacramento River can use South River Road to the Paintersville Bridge detour.

The reconstruction cost for Freeport Bridge Deck Repair is $300,000 and is funded by the Sacramento County Road Fund. Drivers are encouraged to give themselves extra travel time due to the weekday detours.

A detour map can be viewed at: https://sacdot.saccounty.gov/. ★

Kings Korner

By V.G. Harris

Let's Get a Win

By V.G. Harris

As the Sacramento Kings enter the week with a winless 0-6 record to start the 2026/2027 NBA season, fans scratch their heads and ask the question, "where do we go from here?"

In this column I have discussed the value of leadership, and as the Kings continue searching for their first win of the season, I'm asking from what quarter will that leadership come?

Radio talking heads and pundits from all corners are calling for a change in the coaching staff and for All star Domantas Sabonis to be traded.

Doug Christie appears to be a ships captain without a rudder, and of the 6 losses the Kings have to start the season, only 2 of those games did Sacramento have a legitimate chance of winning.

If I have any criticism, it is not having a collective game plan. Simply telling the team to play better defense or shoot more 3's is not a game plan, and I wonder how long it will be before the players begin to lose faith.

All eyes are on Monday night's game against the Dallas Mavericks, and I am hopeful although doubtful that it will produce a win.

For those fans that simply say we don't have the players, I would say as I have before that there is legitimate talent on this team already.

Domantas Sabonis continues to be the constant foundation of the team, and whether it's scoring, rebounds, or defense, Domantas gives it 100% effort from start to finish.

When we talk about leaders, they come from outside the court and most definitely on the court.

While the organization won't stop talking about trading Sabonis, I completely disagree with their assessment, and if the worst thing that Sacramento will have to endure is a cellar dweller of a season to weather the storm, I believe that the fan base will hold their nose and stay the course.

Let it not be said that Sacramento fans ever turned their backs on this team, because it has never happened.

However, ownership needs to begin the process of making cogent changes that will not just bring energy to this team, but true direction.

The idea of playing the rookies and second year players is a no-brainer, but the offensive is unimaginative, and on defense any semblance of guarding the 3-point line simply isn't there.

Fans need to give credit where credit is due, and both Domantas Sabonis and Zach Lavine have shown up in a big way.

Is it any surprise that a healthy Domantas Sabonis is already leading the league in rebounding once again, and relative newcomer De'Andre Hunter is currently 32nd in the league in 3-pointers made.

Zach Lavine is tied in 32nd place in 3-pointers made, and I look for that to improve dramatically if the Kings can make progress with their offensive schemes.

Yes, Kings fans, it is a dark time in Sactown, but this early in the season it is way too early to throw in the towel.

I am but one opinion, and I'm anxious to hear from you, the fans.

Go to thekingskorner.com and subscribe to my website and please, by all means leave me a comment. What direction do you believe the Sacramento Kings should go?

I'll publish your collective thoughts, and we'll navigate through this difficult time together.

Without question bright spots remain in both Darius Acuff Jr., and rookie Emanuel Sharp, and how the Kings develop these 2 youngsters will be a testament of good things to come.

I heard a poem many years ago that the Kings should take note of and it goes like this:

For want of a nail, the shoe was lost,
For want of a shoe, the horse was lost,
For want of a horse, the rider was lost,
For want of a battle, the kingdom was lost,
And all for the want of a horseshoe nail.

Kings fans, Doug Christie and his staff don't need to reinvent the wheel. They need to find one small thing that is wrong and correct it. Once that has been accomplished, find the next thing, and repeat the process.

Once this exercise has been done a dozen times watch the victories mount up, and one more thing. Keep us informed as to what you're doing. We're all waiting for positive things to root about.

All the best! ★

California's Campaign Drama Entices Political Junkies, But Serious Issues Get Short Shrift



By Dan Walters, CALMatters.org

This year's political campaigns gave California's political junkies plenty of chaotic events to savor: gerrymandered congressional districts; the sudden, scandalous downfall of a frontrunner for governor, and running feuds with President Donald Trump over voting.

However, for those of us who just want effective governance that addresses the multitude of challenges arising from California's socioeconomic complexity, the campaign season has been drearily disappointing.

Few, if any, office seekers have even mentioned such serious issues as unstable water supplies, budget deficits, homelessness or rising living costs, much less offered voters clear-eyed approaches to them.

The Democratic playbook has often been to blame Trump for everything negative, even though those important issues afflicted California long before he appeared on the political scene.

Meanwhile Republicans, with very slim chances of making gains in such a blue state, have pinned every unresolved problem on outgoing Gov. Gavin Newsom, even though he inherited many of them when he took office in 2019.

Polls tell us that Californians are in a sour mood. They're worried about soaring living costs and the economy in general and are unhappy with the status quo. Yet they seem unwilling to make big political changes — preferring the known to taking a chance on the unknown.

That contradictory attitude is particularly evident in the campaigns for the two most important offices being filled this year, the governor and mayor of Los Angeles.

Despite having served in public offices for decades, including a stint as attorney general, Xavier Becerra's support for governor in polls last spring was in the low single digits. Back then the odds-on favorite, Congressmember Eric Swalwell, self-destructed as multiple women accused him of sexual harassment or even assault.

Swalwell not only dropped out of the race but resigned his congressional seat. The only other candidates with double-digit support were left-leaning billionaire Democrat Tom Steyer and Republicans Steve Hilton and Chad Bianco.

But they were unacceptable to Democratic leaders and their labor union allies, who immediately chose Becerra as a known quantity and therefore the most acceptable of the single-digit candidates. With Democrats holding a massive edge in voter registration, that made Becerra the likely next governor, and he still is.

Becerra's campaign has consisted almost entirely of blaming Trump and refusing to offer any tangible approaches to the multiple issues he'll likely inherit from Newsom. He knows he can win without committing himself publicly, so he doesn't.

While Becerra represents the don't-rock-the-boat stance at the state level, Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass, another veteran of multiple offices, is his counterpart in the state's largest city.

But she, unlike Becerra, cannot coast into victory. Bass is carrying heavy baggage from her sloppy handling of the wildfires that swept through Los Angeles and its suburbs early last year.

Bass was junketing in Ghana when the fires erupted, even though there had been forecasts that hot winter winds could create wildfire conditions. She tried to blame others for the miscue, fired the L.A. fire chief and later attempted to alter an official report on how the fires were handled.

Bass is highly unpopular but offers herself as a known quantity, while her left-leaning opponent, city councilmember Nithya Raman, represents the potentially disruptive unknown. The outcome could go either way.

Thank goodness the cacophony of shrieking TV spots making promises that cannot be kept or portraying rivals as devils incarnate — and the fliers filling our mailboxes — will all end soon.

Sometime after the polls close Tuesday — maybe weeks later in some close contests — we'll learn who survived. The losers will be disappointed, the winners will be jubilant and once again we will hope that they'll do more than plot how to climb the next rung on the political ladder.

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

Social Security Matters

Am I Entitled to More Social Security as a Veteran?



By Russell Gloor, AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor

Dear Rusty: I served in the U.S. Army from July 1964 to July 1967. Am I eligible for a higher Social Security payment? Thank you. ***Signed: Vietnam Era Army Vet***

Dear Army Vet: Please accept my sincere thanks for your military service. I believe you are referring to the "Special Extra Credit for Military Service" which has been the subject of many published articles. That refers to a special Social Security accommodation available only to those who served in the military during specific periods of time - but it does not add to your monthly Social Security payment. Rather, it adds to your military earnings record for the years you served, which may (or may not) result in a higher Social Security benefit when you later claim Social Security.

Here's how it works in your case:

Serving between 1964 and 1967, if you told Social Security of your military service when you applied for Social Security benefits (or gave them a copy of your DD-214), they would have added up to $1,200 per year to your military pay record (FYI, those who served after 1966 were automatically given earnings credit for their military service years). However, whether those special extra credits would affect your monthly Social Security benefit depends on your lifetime earnings record when you later claimed Social Security.

When you applied for benefits, Social Security reviewed your lifetime earnings and used the highest earning 35 years of earnings over your lifetime (adjusted for inflation) to calculate your "Primary Insurance Amount" (or "PIA," which is what you get if you claim benefits to start at your Social Security full retirement age). If, after your military service, you had 35 or more years of earnings which were higher than your earnings while serving in the military, Social Security would have used your later higher earning years to calculate your benefit, and your military earnings would not have had an effect on your Social Security benefit. However, if any of your military earnings (including the "special extra credits") were among the highest over your lifetime, then those higher military earnings would be included when calculating your Social Security benefit.

So, whether you would benefit from these "special extra credits for military service" depends largely on your earnings history after you were discharged from active duty. If your military earnings were among the highest earning years over your lifetime, and you provided SSA with a copy of your DD-214 when you applied for Social Security, then your current SS benefit already includes consideration of your military service (FYI, Social Security should have asked about your military service when you applied). If you didn't tell SS about your military service when you applied for Social Security, or if you aren't sure, you should contact the SSA at 1.800.772.1213 and ask if you were given those "special extra credits for military service" for your 1960s military service years when you applied for Social Security. But if you had at least 35 years of higher earnings after you left military service, your current SS benefit is already based on those later higher earning years, and you will not get any additional /Social Security benefit because of the "special extra credits" for your military service years.

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Abdul El-Sayed is no JFK

Abdul El-Sayed, the Democratic Senate candidate in Michigan, thinks he's another JFK, not in terms of charm or wit, but as a fellow victim of religious bigotry.

When he ran for president in 1960, Jack Kennedy indeed encountered anti-Catholic prejudice, including the preposterous claim that he'd take orders as president from the Vatican. This was irrational conspiracy theorizing, whereas the questions that El-Sayed is facing about his family's ties to extremist groups are well-founded.

It wasn't a right-wing smear artist who first said that El-Sayed's mother was with the Muslim Brotherhood, but his own half-sister. She tweeted in 2012, "Had an amazing talk with my mom about her activism in the Muslim Brotherhood during the early 70s while she was in college #respect." She suggested that other family members in Egypt were involved in the Muslim Brotherhood. His mom -- just her luck -- also worked for the Islamic American Relief Agency, which the U.S. government designated a supporter of terrorist groups.

Now, El-Sayed could say that none of this has anything to do with him, since his biological mother didn't raise him, and that his mother made a mistake in working for the Brotherhood. Or he could produce evidence of the falsity of what his half-sister said, which, if it's wrong, shouldn't be difficult given that both his mother and half-sister are around (his half-sister is a radically anti-Zionist University of Chicago professor who is very excited about El-Sayed's candidacy).

Instead, he's argued that questions about this constitute rank Islamophobia. He makes it sound as though the Muslim Brotherhood is a fraternal association, a Knights of Columbus for Muslims, such that any concerns about associations with it are inherently hateful. His reaction is a little like someone being asked about his family's alleged KKK associations, and responding, "How dare you question my white Protestant heritage."

In a viral exchange, a questioner at a town hall asked the candidate if he disavows the Muslim Brotherhood. El-Sayed responded with a curt, "Yeah, sure," before challenging his interlocutor about why he was asking and going on a long riff about freedom of religion in America. Of course, no one is challenging his right to worship as he pleases, or to run for public office as a faithful Muslim. The questions have to do with the associations and his own views.

His father-in-law, a major donor to his campaign, served on the founding committee of the Islamic Society of North America, a group designated as an unindicted co-conspirator in the 2007 Holy Land Foundation case. He also -- just his luck -- served as president of the Council on American-Islamic Relations Michigan chapter, another group named an unindicted co-conspirator in that case.

As for El-Sayed himself, the New York Times reports that when he was a student at the University of Michigan, he was president of the Muslim Students Association, an organization founded by the Muslim Brotherhood in the 1960s. In 2012, he joined an open letter backing Muslim Brotherhood leader Mohamed Morsi, who had just become president of Egypt: "We, leaders of the Egyptian community, support the revolutionary decisions taken by the president, and we call on him to purge the media and the police as quickly as possible."

Here one must pause to express a little sympathy for El-Sayed: Who among us hasn't, at least once, urged an Islamist authoritarian to crack down on his political opponents? During this Senate campaign, El-Sayed excused an Islamist attack on a Michigan synagogue (before apologizing). He invited streamer Hasan Piker, who has repeatedly expressed sympathy with terror groups, to campaign with him. And he has refused to say that Iran is more dangerous than Israel.

He doesn't deserve the benefit of any doubt and has responded to questions about all of this with evasions and high dudgeon. No matter how often El-Sayed invokes JFK, Kennedy didn't defend his Catholic faith as a way of distracting from his own extremism and that of people around him.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.

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Board Approves Dues Increase



The Rancho Murieta Association Board Oct. 6 approved a contract to construct a new water feature at the South Gate.

Continued from page 1

perimeter fencing. Additional dues revenue will be needed for the planned North Gate improvements.

Director Chris Childs praised Maintenance Manager Troy Schaffner and his crew for procuring and installing perimeter fencing using association employees rather than outside contractors.

Childs said the dues increase would be about four times as large if the association had to hire contractors to perform the work.

Childs also credited Schaffner with helping control costs by purchasing used equipment in good condition rather than new equipment.

South Gate Water Feature

The board also approved spending $31,360 from reserve funds to hire Nimbus Pond Inc., an El Dorado Hills contractor specializing in ponds and water features, to repair and reconstruct the South Gate water feature as part of the ongoing entrance renovation.

Pesticide Concerns

The Maintenance Committee discussed a resident's concerns about chemicals used in landscape maintenance.

O'Hern said the committee discussed a resident's concerns about pesticides used in landscape maintenance and reviewed California regulations governing their use. He said the association's practices were within state requirements.

The committee did not recommend changes to the current maintenance program but will continue to monitor requests and concerns regarding chemical safety.

Schaffner said pesticide applications are supervised by properly credentialed personnel and that the association recently passed an inspection by the county agricultural commissioner's office.

North Gate Repairs, Pickleball Shade

Repairs to the North Gate guard shack, which was damaged in a vehicle crash, were awaiting the contractor's permits at the time of the meeting.

O'Hern said work would begin once the permits were obtained. Schaffner will notify residents of the construction schedule, and traffic controls will be established during repairs to minimize disruption at the entrance.

The Maintenance Committee also discussed shade improvements at the pickleball courts.

Schaffner reported that his crew had assembled a shade structure using materials already available to the association. Some Maintenance Committee members favored structures like those at the community's dog parks.

The pickleball club has offered to contribute to the project, but updated proposals had not been received. The committee will revisit the matter later.

Recreation activities

Director John Haviland, who chairs the Recreation Committee, reported on plans for the Oct. 31 Trunk or Treat celebration at Stonehouse Park, as well as several upcoming holiday activities.

The community Christmas tree lighting is scheduled for Nov. 27, and judging for the annual holiday lighting contest will begin Dec. 5.

The committee also reviewed revisions to the Stonehouse Park use policy, which are expected to be presented to the board at a future meeting.

The next regular RMA Board meeting is scheduled Nov. 17. The annual meeting and election of directors is scheduled for Nov. 19. ★

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SECURITY LOGS

The following is a summary of activity for the Rancho Murieta Community Services District for the following dates. Note: these log entries are condensed. For full security log details, see the CSD website at rmcsd.com.

Oct. 16

3:25 a.m., assist, North Gate: patrol asked to respond to escort a guest out of the community due to access issues. Patrol contacted the homeowner. She confirmed the subject had been removed from the access list the previous day. Homeowner stated she intended to submit paperwork to add him as a resident but was attempting to teach him a lesson.

Oct. 18

2:34 a.m., burglar alarm, St. Vincent De Paul Church. Patrol found one unlocked door but no sign of entry. Responsible party rearmed the alarm.

6:22 p.m., Rio Oso, water leak, resident reported water flowing downhill, collecting beneath his residence and draining into the street. Multiple homes were reportedly affected. The source was unknown. CSD water was notified and confirmed an ongoing investigation to locate the source.

Oct. 20

5:04 p.m., animal complaint, Stonehouse Park soccer field. Report of five unleashed dogs. Patrol advised owners about leash requirements via his PA system. The group complied after 10 minutes and left the area.

6:30 p.m., resident complaint, Via Sereno: report of an e-moto driving at a high rate of speed from Murieta Parkway.

Oct. 21

10:49 a.m., welfare check, Callaway Drive: Security Supervisor Brandon Arino and Rancho Murieta Association Compliance Manager Chris Smith responded but received no response. They contacted the emergency contacts. They contacted the homeowner, who returned to the home in good health. The keys located at the front door were returned to the homeowner.

5:45 p.m. miscellaneous, Abierto Drive, CSD patrol and RMA compliance responded to assist a new homeowner during a property inspection. The homeowner reported the previous owner had delayed vacating the property following the sale. The officers accompanied the homeowner inside and confirmed the previous owner had vacated, leaving clothing and furniture behind. The homeowner said he would change the locks.

As the officers left, they saw a boy who appeared to be under 16 driving on Abierto Drive. The boy acknowledged he didn't have a driver's license and complied with instructions to stop.

While officers were departing, a male driving a Chevrolet Suburban confronted them near Murieta South Parkway and Reynosa. The driver questioned officers about contacting his son about unlicensed driving. The CSD officer explained the contact was intended as an advisal. The driver became verbally confrontational, used profanity, and demanded his son be cited. Citations were issued for unlicensed operation of a golf cart and interference with CSD/RMA personnel.

8:29 p.m. RMA rule violation, Lake Calero. Patrol contacted a resident and a guest in a fire pickup. After they were advised to leave, the subjects left without incident.

Oct. 22

5:30 p.m., RMA rule violation, location not listed, guest fishing without a resident present. The guest left without incident.

6:06 p.m., Report of smoke, behind Lake Calero and an odor of smoke near Puerto Drive and Camino Del Labo. Patrol couldn't locate any signs of fire. The odor appeared to be coming from a residential fireplace.

Oct. 24

9:39 p.m., possible doorbell ditch, Lindera Drive. The reporting party said a boy approached the house holding a pumpkin. Once the security light activated, the boy left in a hurry and departed in a golf cart. The boy was about 4 feet tall, light-complected and wore a hood over his face. ★



Publisher,
Paul V. Scholl

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What's Cooking in California Schools?

Farm to School Summit brings state leaders, local students and fresh ideas

By Ornella Rossi



Farmers, school nutrition workers and state leaders gathered at Soil Born Farms for the 2026 California Farm to School Summit. Photo courtesy of the California Farm to School Summit

RANCHO CORDOVA, CA (MPG) - California has spent five years making sure public school students can eat breakfast and lunch for free. Now, the question is what goes on their trays.

That was the focus Thursday, Oct. 15, as farmers, school nutrition workers and state leaders gathered at Soil Born Farms for the 2026 California Farm to School Summit. The summit celebrated free school meals and examined how districts can serve more fresh, locally grown food.

Local students helped bring that mission to life. Cordova Gardens Elementary School students opened the morning program with a performance of "Dirt Made My Lunch." At the farm's animal barn, designed for regenerative farming and agricultural learning, Cordova High School FFA members demonstrated how milk fat affects ice cream texture and discussed wool quality, safe animal handling, poultry and fresh egg care, rabbit care and competition preparation, and animal branding and identification.

Cordova High's FFA floral class also hosted "Big Smiles and Little Blooms," showing visitors how to arrange flowers and discussing the benefits of floral design for mental well-being. Both schools are part of Folsom Cordova Unified School District, which partners with Soil Born Farms to provide hands-on agricultural education.

The local involvement was one piece of a statewide effort. In 2021, California became the first state to adopt free breakfast and lunch for all public school students, regardless of family income. Schools have since served approximately 3.5 billion free meals, according to summit organizers.

California has also invested $86 million in its Farm to School Incubator Grant Program, supporting 375 projects benefiting 4.2 million students. The grants help schools buy from local growers, improve menus and teach students where their food comes from.

"What we have achieved in school meals and farm to school is something that many did not think was possible five years ago," said Abby Halperin, senior policy and evaluation manager at the Center for Ecoliteracy, opening the first panel.

The discussion, "Farm to School in Policy: California as a Model for the Nation," brought together farmer Anna Nakamura Knight of Old Grove Orange, Tahoe Truckee Unified School District nutrition director Kat Soltanmorad and Food Insight Group co-founder Beth Katz.

Soltanmorad said free school meals have helped remove the divide between students whose families could afford lunch and those who could not.

"There was no difference when you came through the line," Soltanmorad said. Her district has also expanded scratch cooking and purchasing from regional farms.

For Knight, the partnerships make a difference at the other end of the food chain.

"For us, farm to school is what helps small farm families like mine keep farming forever," she said.

Knight described how selling directly to school districts gives her family farm steadier income and opportunities to host student field trips.

But getting fresh food onto the lunch tray is not as simple as changing a menu.

A second morning panel, "Farm to School in the Kitchen: From Ultraprocessed to Fresh School Meals," focused on staffing, equipment and the practical work behind healthier meals. Panelists included Ambrosia Allen, nutrition services director for Elk Grove Unified School District; Stella Ndahura of Azusa Unified; and Sunny Baker of the National Farm to School Network.

When asked about priorities Allen said districts need realistic timelines, equipment and training to buy and prepare more local food. Ndahura described a problem many smaller districts face: "Kitchens are old and dated. We need refrigeration space."

The discussion comes as California prepares to implement Assembly Bill 1264, a 2025 law requiring certain ultraprocessed foods to be phased out of school meals. Allen said school nutrition staff need a clearer definition before they can plan menu changes.

"But first, tell me what ultraprocessed is. If I don't know, I can't move away from that," Allen said.

Baker warned against replacing restricted products with newly formulated versions of the same foods. "We can't have reformulation stand in for real food. Kids know the difference," she said.

A California Department of Public Health representative told attendees the agency is working with the Department of Education to gather input from food service directors about what districts can realistically prepare and serve. A public survey on the new definitions is open through Nov. 15, and a separate survey for school nutrition directors is expected early next year.

The afternoon program examined how schools can create dependable markets for farmers in "Farm to School in the Field: Climate-Smart, California-Grown School Food," with representatives from Esperanza Community Farms, the Yurok Tribe Food Sovereignty program and Los Angeles Unified School District. The session examined how hands-on learning about food production helps students better understand the food system and encourages curiosity about trying new foods.

"Since coming to Cordova, I have gained more experience and knowledge of production, process, and the specific sciences behind plant and animal production through opportunities at Soil Born Farms," Rubio Shared.

A later panel, "Farm to School in the Classroom: Hands-on Food Education" featured Cordova High student and FFA chapter president Victoria Rubio alongside educators from the Agricultural Institute of Marin and Rio School District, discussing learning through gardens, farms and cafeterias.

The summit also included California Food for California Kids Leadership and Innovation Awards honoring 10 school nutrition leaders statewide. Elk Grove Unified's Michelle Drake received the Food Access and Equity Award for expanding nutrition education, farm visits and hands-on learning opportunities.

"These leaders are proving that fresh and local school food is possible at scale," said Center for Ecoliteracy Executive Director Alexa Norstad in a statement.

A full list of recipients is available at cafarmtoschoolsummit.com/awards.

At Soil Born Farms, a 55-acre Rancho Cordova urban farm and education center, those ideas came together. Founder and co-director Shawn Harrison encouraged visitors to see how gardens, kitchens and farm experiences work together.

"When you bring them together, magical stuff starts to happen," Harrison told attendees. ★

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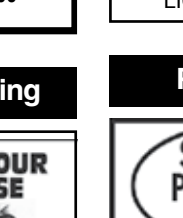
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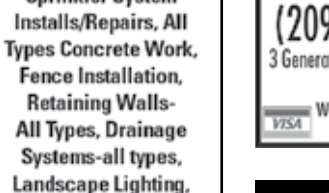
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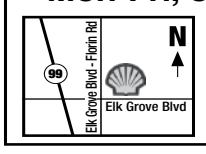
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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

New GM Meet-and-Greet

Rancho Murieta residents are invited to meet Marti Brown, the new general manager of the Rancho Murieta Community Services District, at a community meet-and-greet at 5:30 p.m. Nov. 17, at the district office, 15160 Jackson Road. Brown, who began work Oct. 19, brings more than 20 years of local government leadership experience to the district. She most recently served five years as city manager of Willows and previously was general manager of the Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District in Contra Costa County and city manager of Marysville.

As general manager, Brown oversees the district's water, wastewater, solid waste, drainage and security operations. She takes the helm as the district faces important decisions about water supplies, infrastructure improvements and future development. The informal gathering will give residents an opportunity to meet Brown and welcome her to the community.

Veterans Day Celebration Planned

The Rancho Murieta Veterans of Foreign Wars (Post 12215 Auxiliary) invites veterans and their families to a Veterans Day celebration Nov. 11, at the Rancho Murieta Association Building. Doors open at 9:30 a.m., with the program beginning at 10 a.m. and concluding at 11:30 a.m. Local Scouts will welcome veterans as they arrive, escort the colors and lead the Pledge of Allegiance to open the program. VFW Auxiliary President Sharyn Verdon will welcome attendees, followed by remarks from Dan Pennington, VFW Post junior vice commander. Coffee, doughnuts and bagels will be served, and each veteran attending will receive a complimentary raffle ticket. The Auxiliary looks forward to a morning of friendship and fellowship with local veterans and their families.

Christmas Craft Fair Coming

The Rancho Murieta Country Club will host a Christmas craft fair on Nov. 21, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The event will feature unique handmade gifts, holiday decorations and other items created by local artisans. Shoppers will have an opportunity to find one-of-a-kind Christmas gifts while supporting local craftspeople.

Celebrating with High Voltage

The Rancho Murieta Women's Club will celebrate the holiday season Dec. 2, with a luncheon featuring High Voltage, the premier touring company of El Dorado Musical Theatre. The reservation deadline is 5 p.m., Nov. 20.

The talented young performers, 12 to 19 years old, entertain audiences throughout the Sacramento region and beyond with powerful vocals and energetic dancing. Their holiday program will feature classic and contemporary seasonal favorites. The luncheon will be held at Rancho Murieta Country Club, with doors opening at 10 a.m., entertainment beginning at 11 a.m. and lunch served at 12:15 p.m.

The menu includes butternut squash soup, chicken in pesto sauce with mashed potatoes and vegetables, and pecan pie with caramel drizzle. Vegetarian and gluten-free options are available. Tickets are $35 for Women's Club members and $40 for non-members. Reservations and payment must be received by the Nov. 20 deadline. Reservation forms and checks payable to RMWC may be mailed to Rancho Murieta Women's Club, P.O. Box 527, Rancho Murieta, CA 95683, or dropped off at 14963 Reynosa Drive in Rancho Murieta South or 15019 Guadalupe Drive in Rancho Murieta North. For information, contact Barbara Armstrong at 916-541-1884 or Laura McAllister at 805-404-7974.

'Clue' Coming to Rosemont

Mystery, humor and dance will take center stage when Murieta Dance Company presents its annual recital, "Clue," Dec. 12-13 at Rosemont High School, 9594 Kiefer Blvd., Sacramento. The family-friendly production promises a humorous murder mystery featuring familiar characters from the classic board game, including Miss Scarlet, Colonel Mustard, Mrs. Peacock and Professor Plum. Performances are scheduled for 5 p.m., Dec. 12, and 2 p.m., Dec. 13. Tickets are $15 for general admission and $25 for VIP seating in the first seven rows. Tickets are available through Murieta Dance Company. For more information, call 916-296-6503. ★

Social Media Posts Controversy

Story and photo by Gail Bullen



Rancho Murieta Community Services District Board President John Merchant (left) gestures toward developer Bob Keil as Keil challenges Director Bill Gere (second from left) over social media statements about water augmentation fees during the Oct. 21 board meeting. The exchange grew heated as Gere repeatedly interrupted Keil, who questioned the accuracy of Gere's posts.

RANCHO MURIETA, CA (MPG) - Statements posted on social media by Rancho Murieta Community Services District Director Bill Gere drew sharp criticism at the Oct. 21 board meeting, prompting calls for rules governing directors' online conduct and a heated confrontation over the district's water augmentation fund.

The controversy began during public comment when Bob Keil, a partner in the Residences of Murieta Hills development, welcomed new General Manager Marti Brown and expressed concern about Gere's social media statements.

"I believe them to be inaccurate and inflammatory," Keil said, offering copies of Gere's posts to Brown and district legal counsel Patrick Enright for review.

During the correspondence portion of the meeting, Jeff Pearson of Rancho Murieta Properties challenged three statements by Gere about who would pay for additional water supplies needed for future development.

Pearson cited posts on Nextdoor and Facebook that he said conflicted with district records.

First, he disputed a statement suggesting existing residents might be required to pay approximately $20,000 per home for additional water supplies.

Pearson said the figure came from a district study proposing a water supply augmentation fee of $20,436 per equivalent dwelling unit, roughly one home. That development fee has not been adopted. The current fee is $7,752.71.

Second, Pearson challenged Gere's assertion that developers had repeatedly refused to pay for water exploration and that residents would therefore have to cover the estimated $2 million to $3 million cost.

Pearson said developers are already required to pay water augmentation fees under district regulations. He also cited a development agreement requiring the developer to pay the fee for each building and construct water improvements at its own expense.

Third, Pearson disputed Gere's statement questioning the existence of a separate fund for augmentation fees, pointing to district financial reports identifying the water augmentation fund.

With the Nov. 3 election approaching, Pearson said residents deserved accurate information about who pays for additional water supplies, particularly from a sitting director who is seeking reelection.

Call for Social Media Policy

Tom Shewchuk, a candidate for the CSD board, urged directors to establish guidelines for online conduct, possibly incorporating them into the district's code of ethics.

"I would strongly encourage this district and this board to come up with policies for the district and the board," Shewchuk said.

He also suggested designating a staff member to communicate with residents online, recommending Amelia Wilder, who served as interim general manager before Brown took office Oct. 19.

Director Randy Jenco opposed having a district representative participate directly in online discussions. Instead, he suggested examining how other public agencies handle communications. "We don't need to reinvent the wheel here," Jenco said.

Brown agreed. "You are correct. There are lots of answers out there, and there is a way to proceed," she said.

Director Tim Maybee criticized board members who, when confronted about their online comments, claim they were posting as private residents. "You got to make a decision. You ran for the board," he said.

Maybee said the problem was not limited to Gere and had occurred in the past. He said the current controversy had been going on for some time and needed to be addressed.

Board President John Merchant also regularly uses social media to comment on district matters.

Mike Martel, another candidate for the board, questioned whether the district had an obligation to correct inaccurate statements made by its elected representatives.

"Somebody needs to correct it, either the president or the lawyers or the general manager," Martel said.

Enright responded that the district's control over social media was limited. "The district has no control over the general social media. The only social media account we have control over is our own account," he said.

Enright said he does not monitor Nextdoor or Facebook to review statements made by directors or other users.

Martel, who said he has lived in Rancho Murieta for 40 years, questioned whether the California attorney general should investigate the controversy. "Something smells wrong here," he said, describing the situation as the worst he had encountered during his years in the community.

The board did not direct Brown to develop a social media policy.

Confrontation over Augmentation Fund

The dispute resurfaced following Finance Director Cecilia Min's report, which included fees collected from developers for water-related improvements.

Keil approached the podium and read language from the district's code stating that water augmentation fees are intended to finance expansion of the district's water supply system to meet future demands from undeveloped land.

He then challenged Gere over a statement concerning whether a separate account existed for augmentation fees.

Gere repeatedly interrupted Keil, insisting that his remarks were not relevant to the finance report and at one point telling him, "Sit down, Bob."

Keil maintained that his comments were relevant because the finance report included water augmentation fees collected from developers.

When Keil said Gere had posted that there was no special account for augmentation fees, Gere responded, "I did not say that."

Keil continued, quoting a statement he attributed to Gere: "Saying we have a special account set aside just for them is false."

Merchant also intervened, asserting his authority to limit Keil's remarks.

"You don't answer mail. You don't let people speak. This is crazy," Keil said.

As his speaking time expired, Keil directed one final question to Gere: "You have stated to the public that there is no special account for augmentation fees paid by the developer. Did you say that, or did you not say that?"

Gere did not answer the question.

Merchant declared Keil's time expired and told him to sit down.

Maybee urged Keil to submit his questions in writing to the board, legal counsel and general manager, saying he assumed the district would respond but could not promise it.

"I appreciate that," Keil replied. "It ain't going to happen if he is not willing to take a position."

When Merchant again told him to sit down, Keil responded, "I'll do better than that, John. I'll leave."

As Keil was leaving, Enright said the district was working on a California Public Records Act request submitted by Keil and Steve Booth and expected to provide at least a partial response the following day.

"That guy should not be on the board," Keil said as he walked out, referring to Gere.

Questions about Fund Balance

Pearson then returned to the podium, asking the district to prepare a plain-language report explaining the water augmentation fund, including how much money it contains and how the money may be spent.

Gere interrupted Pearson, questioning whether his comments were relevant to the finance report. Merchant instructed Gere to allow Pearson to finish and restored time lost to the interruption.

Pearson said the last audited fund balance he had seen, from 2024, was slightly more than $2 million. He said he believed the fund might now contain approximately $3 million but had been unable to obtain a current figure.

Enright said the district had completed its accounting of the fund through June 30, 2026, and would provide Pearson with the same information being prepared for Keil and Booth.

In an Oct. 22 letter to Keil, Enright reported that the fund contained $2,877,965.93 as of June 30, 2026, approximately $703,000 more than the balance previously reported by the district.

Enright explained that the earlier report had not included certain augmentation fees, interest earnings, interfund loan repayments and an adjustment to expenditures for the previous two fiscal years.

The revised balance is unaudited and subject to change because the district has not completed its audits for fiscal years 2024-25 and 2025-26.

The discussion also raised questions about how long the district may hold augmentation fees without spending them.

Jenco asked Enright when the district could get in trouble if the money remained unspent.

"Well, it's not that we have to spend it. We've got to have a plan to spend it," Enright said. "We have to have a capital facility type project to spend it."

Enright said he would provide the board with the applicable time requirements at its next meeting.

The district has not completed its long-term planning for projects that would augment its water supply. At a March meeting, Min said the district needed to determine its capital improvement needs for the next 10 years before completing an updated water augmentation fee study.

This story is at therivervalley-times.com and on Facebook. ★

Wilton to Recognize Veterans



Area residents enjoy Wilton's Military and Veterans' Appreciation Day breakfast at the 2025 Appreciation Day. Photo by Gary Soto Photo by Gary Soto

By Fran Soto

WILTON, CA (MPG) - Members of the Wilton History Group are preparing for their annual Military and Veterans' Appreciation Day to be held Nov. 11. The event will be held at the Wilton Community Center, 9717 Colony Road, on the corner of Dillard and Colony roads. Ample parking is available in front of the center. The morning program includes a pancake breakfast, veteran and military displays and a short program.

Doors open at 8 a.m., and all attendees are asked to sign in at the welcome table. The pancake breakfast hours are 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. The breakfast is free to all veterans and their immediate family members. All others are welcome to enjoy the breakfast by donating.

Veteran and military displays include a large collection of artifacts, uniforms, Wilton veteran photos and information as well as binders with newspaper articles. Wilton History Group member Alice Kutzer has spent many years collecting veteran photos and information and creating artful display boards.

"It has been a labor of love," Kutzer said. "I have enjoyed every minute of working to honor our veterans."

Many of the artifacts and uniforms were donated by Wilton History Group members, their families and the community. Several years ago, Kutzer began a project of gathering newspaper articles about area veterans and area residents and placing these articles in binders. Her project has grown to be a valuable resource that is easy to view and preserves much local information that could have been lost. Those binders referring to veterans will be on display for perusing.

A short program will begin at 9 a.m. Wilton History Group member Jim Ring will be master of ceremonies. Pastors Jonathan Vickery, Living Waters Church, and John Schmidt, Wilton Bible Church, will offer the invocation and the benediction. The Trail-Life group will conduct the flag ceremony. Speakers include Chaplin John Kent who will speak on the significance of the missing man's table. The military speakers will be Veteran Jim Koroush, who is turning 90 years old in November, and Erin Radulovich, a retired 20-year Air Force veteran. Kutzer and Ring will read a list of Wilton veterans who have died and are on our 'Memory OF' boards. New this year will be a collection box for used U.S. flags for a future flag retirement ceremony.

At the end of the program all attending veterans will be invited to pose for a group photo. All area residents are invited to attend the appreciation day.

"Although we specifically name our Wilton veterans, all area veterans are invited," Kutzer said. "We honor all our veterans and thank them for their service." ★



Wilton military veterans gather for a group photo at the Wilton History Group's annual Military and Veterans' Appreciation Day. Photo by Gary Soto

School Stabbing Injures Two

By Keith Burbank

ELK GROVE, CA (MPG) - Two Pleasant Grove High School students suffered injuries in a stabbing Oct. 28 at the school, Elk grove police said.

One of the students is in life-threatening condition, police said, while the other is expected to live.

Officers responded at 3:45 p.m. Oct. 28 to the school after someone reported the stabbing, according to police.

Four students were involved in a fight in a restroom when one student stabbed two others, according to preliminary information from police.

The stabbing suspect and another student suspect, both teenagers, were arrested on attempted murder charges and taken to Juvenile Hall, police said.

One suspect was a Pleasant Grove High School student while the other attended another school in the Elk Grove Unified School District, according to police.

More law enforcement and security personnel will be on campus Oct. 29, and crisis personnel will be available to students who need or want to talk about the stabbing. ★

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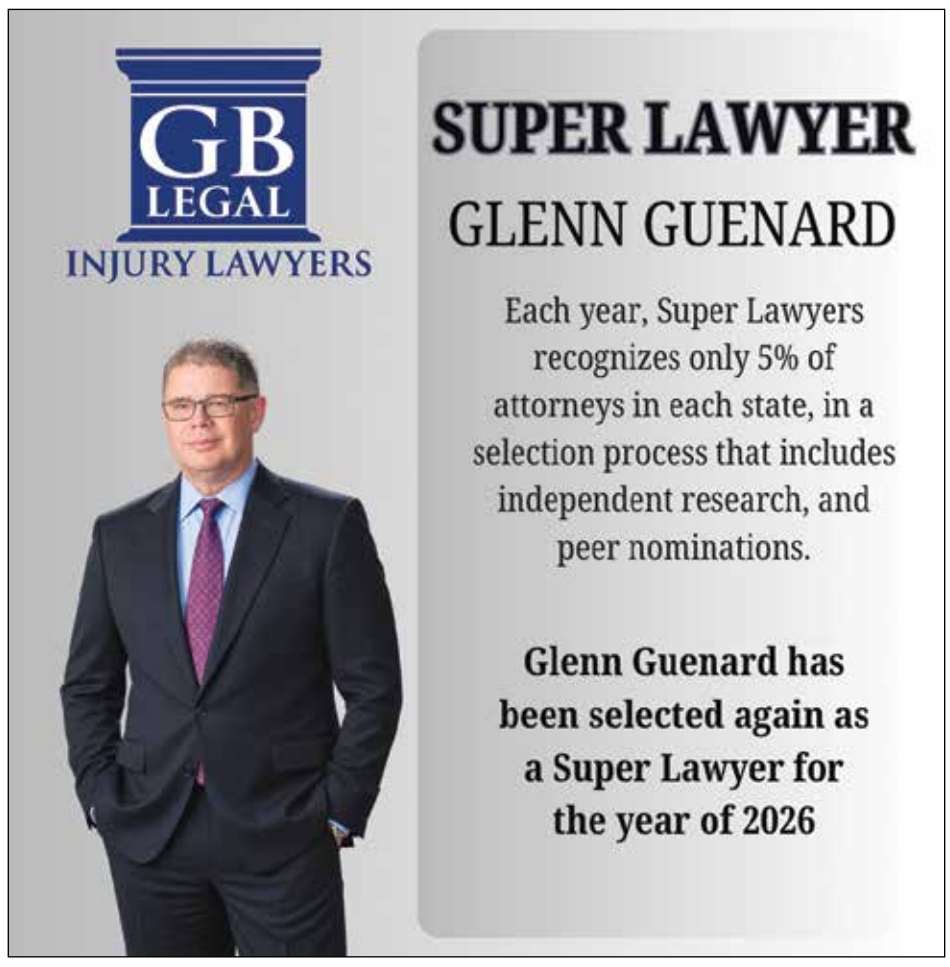
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Blood Drive Meets Goal



William Moss, a lifelong blood donor who has been donating at Rancho Murieta blood drives for the past three years, receives assistance from Vitalant phlebotomist Jessica Flores as he makes a Power Red donation during the Oct. 26 community blood drive at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church. Power Red donations collect twice the red blood cells of a regular whole-blood donation, returning the remaining blood components to the donor. The drive, sponsored by the Rancho Murieta Women's Club and Knights of Columbus, met its goal of collecting the equivalent of 57 pints of blood. According to preliminary results from Vitalant, 58 people registered to donate, including two first-time donors. The collection included 49 whole-blood donations and four Power Red donations. Each Power Red donation counted as two donations. Nineteen walk-in donors helped make the drive a success. About 20 donors have already scheduled appointments for the next community blood drive Jan. 25. Photo by Gail Bullen





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