

## Los Osos Man Needs Kidney Donor

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

A Los Osos man's life may depend on the kindness of strangers.

Matt Duffy was diagnosed with stage 5 renal failure in April and needs a kidney transplant to live. He is in need of a living donor.

"I know it's not a small favor to ask but I really want to live," said Matt in an email interview. "There is still a lot of good that I can do for the world."

Matt's condition stems from complications due to Type 1 Juvenile Diabetes that he was diagnosed with when he was 11-years-old.

"Matt is a part of our family," said Taylor Wathen, Matt's roommate. "He is one of my closest friends and has become my daughter's favorite person in the whole world. He has been a part of my daughter's life since she was only a few months old, and he has been there for everything — every doctor's appointment, holiday, illness, milestone, everything. I don't know what we would do without him."

Matt has lived on the Central Coast since 2004 and was a commercial fisherman in the area for many years. In 2014, he lost his career due to vision loss. After 14 surgeries, he was left with less than 40-percent of his vision. He later enrolled in a specialized course to teach him how to re-enter the world as a legally blind individual.

It was through that experience, Duffy cultivated a new dream of wanting to help others so he enrolled in Cuesta College and succeeded in graduating with high honors. He earned an AA transfer degree in psychology and an associate degree in social and behavioral sciences. He is currently a junior at CSU Monterey Bay.

"I'm studying psychology with the intention to go on to obtain a doctorate in clinical psychology, so I can help people get through difficult times in their life," Matt said.

The day before Halloween, Matt had a peritoneal dialysis catheter placed in his abdomen so he could start training to do dialysis at home.

"Unfortunately, Matt had several complications after surgery,



Los Osos resident Matt Duffy needs a live-saving kidney transplant.

so we have recently spent a lot of time in the ER," said Taylor. "He seems to have finally turned the corner the last couple of days and is starting to heal. If healing and training go according to plan, he will be officially starting dialysis at the beginning of December."

Although dialysis may help Matt feel a little better, it also comes with its own risks.

"For people under 45, the mortality rate is around 42% for the first 30 days of dialysis, so it's scary to know that he will be starting that soon," Taylor said. "It's really difficult to watch someone wither away right in front of your eyes. I just feel helpless to do anything since I am not an eligible donor myself."

Matt has been accepted into the Stanford Kidney Transplant Program; however, they say his health will not survive the 10-year wait for a deceased donor. Matt has the unfortunate added difficulty of having O+ blood, which comes with one of the most prolonged wait times.

"We are looking for a living donor because the cadaver donor  
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## Ag is Still King in SLO County

By Neil Farrell



Hemp fields like this one on Los Osos Valley Road contributed to a 29% increase in the value of field crops in 2019, according to the SLO County Agriculture Department's 2019 Crop report.

Agriculture is still king in San Luis Obispo County, according to the County Department of Agriculture's 2019 Annual Crop Report.

Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer of Weights and Measures, Martin Settevendemie, and his crew of technicians, inspectors, office help and biologists totaling about 50 staffers oversee the Crop Report and the Ag Department.

It breaks down the different main crops grown in SLO County and their estimated market value, and once again SLO County's sweetest crop was No. 1. But overall, agriculture production was down nearly \$100 million.

"Overall crop values decreased to \$979,009,000, representing a 5.5% reduction compared to our previous 2018 values," Director Settevendemie said in a cover letter addressed to the State Secretary of Food and Agriculture, Karen Ross. "Agricultural values fluctuate from year to year based on growing conditions, market prices and demand for the various commodities grown within the County. However, the diversity of commodities grown within the county help to dampen major swings in overall value. Despite this decrease, 2019 marked the second highest year in terms of overall value for San Luis Obispo County's agricultural producers."

### Strawberries Again No. 1

Strawberries were the No. 1 crop in SLO County once again with some \$271.34 million representing 28% of the value of the county's total agricultural output.

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## Chamber Walk Tours Business Opportunities

By Neil Farrell

The Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce is doing a series of "Property Talks & Walks" highlighting business opportunities in town that have arisen in some cases due to the coronavirus pandemic response and the business shut downs.

On Nov. 6 a small group of Chamber members and business people visited the empty spaces at 330 Morro Bay Blvd., 360 MBB, and the Bank of America building at MBB and Monterey Street, and Dutchman's Landing on the Embarcadero, which is working on a remodeling proposal.

The walk was broadcast live on Facebook available through the Chamber website.

Ian Starkie, owner/broker with Rock Star Properties, was on hand to talk about the space at 360 MBB, which has been home to various businesses, most recently a real estate office. It's been vacant for over 6 months.

The space goes for \$2 a square foot, Starkie explained, and is 775 s.f., making the rent \$1,500 a month. Inside, the space is a sizable front room (400 s.f.) with an equal sized back room, a small bathroom, and a kitchenette. The hidden gem of the space is a cute little backyard patio protected from the wind.

While it would seem an ideal place to put a vacation rental, considering that it's in a commercial zone and wouldn't require a special permit, Starkie said the City wouldn't approve.

City Community Development Director Scot Graham, who was also along on the walk, said the City frowns on turning ground floor storefronts into vacation rentals, preferring they remain a traditional retail/office use.

"You don't want gaps in the storefronts," Graham said. Because it's 1-story, Graham said there are limitations on re-use of the space. If there were a second story to the building, he said, a vacation rental could go in up there or an apartment.

Ironically, many years ago, someone proposed a 2-story

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## Latest Contracts Push WRF Over \$138M

By Neil Farrell

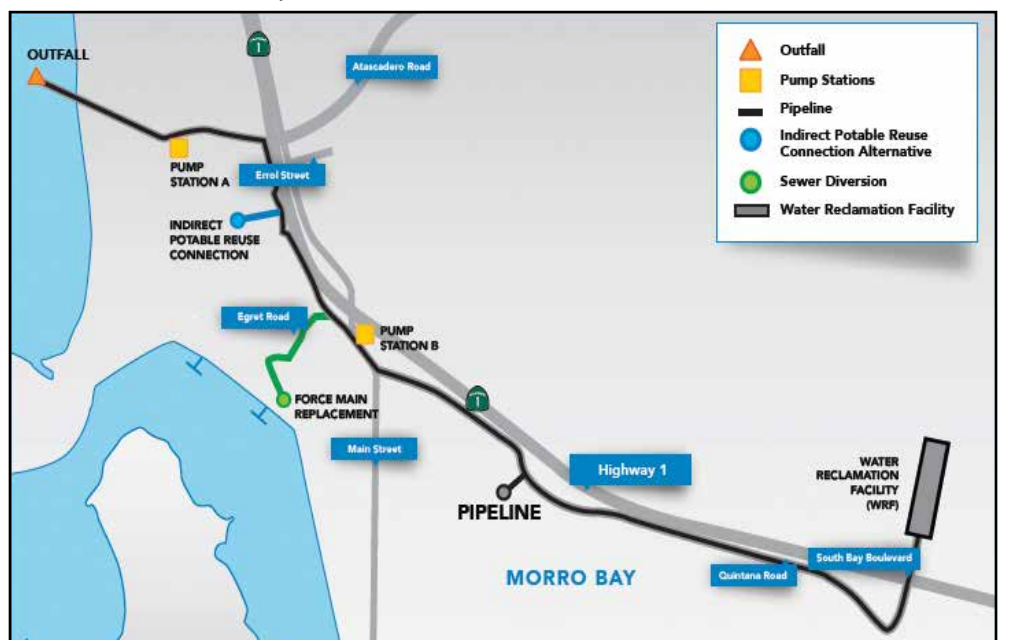
Morro Bay's Water Reclamation Facility project took another over-budget leap with the awarding of a contract for the conveyance system, with the lowest bid some \$7 million over the engineer's estimate.

Anvil Builders, Inc., based in San Francisco, was awarded a \$31.49 million contract to build the conveyance system, which entails running a number of pipes over 3 miles from Atascadero Road through town to the WRF plant, located above the terminus of South Bay Boulevard.

The Council also approved a \$530,000 contract with GSI Water Solutions, Inc., for additional studies of the Morro Creek underground water aquifer and initiate the City's plan to inject treated wastewater into the ground to supplement the water supply, so-called "Indirect Potable Reuse" (IPR).

### Five Bids Received

Unlike the WRF treatment plant that had only two bidders, Anvil was the lowest of five bidders. The others were: OHL USA, Inc., at \$39.67 million; Nicholas Construction at \$42.66M; W.A. Rasic Const., \$38.42M; and John Madonna Const., at \$33.08M. The City's engineer's estimate on the job was \$24.2M, according to a staff report from the Council's Nov. 11 meeting.



This City of Morro Bay diagram shows the routes of the various pipelines that must be installed as part of the City's 'Water Reclamation Facility' project.

Not all were happy with the bidding, as Rasic filed a protest that the project team recommended be rejected by the Council. According to the report, the team decided all the bids were "both responsible and responsive."

### Why Were Bids High?

Why were the bids so high? Blame it too on the pandemic. While the City will work with the contractor following the award to understand the reason for the higher than anticipated

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# County Interested In Owning Salinas Dam

By Neil Farrell



Photo shows the current spillway of the Salinas Dam. The County Flood Control District is seeking to obtain the dam from the Army Corps of Engineers, who built it in 1941. The blue arrow points to where spillway gates might be installed to greatly raise the capacity of Santa Margarita Lake. Photo courtesy SLO County

The County Flood Control and Water Conservation District is interested in taking over the Salinas Dam from the Army Corps of Engineers, and possibly enlarging the capacity of one of SLO County's main drinking water reservoirs.

In September, Supervisors authorized the Flood Control District to send a letter of interest to the Army Corps (USACE) regarding the dam's future, as the federal Government is apparently interested in surplus the old dam.

Built in 1941 to provide water to Camp San Luis Obispo during World War II, the dam no longer serves any "federal" purpose, though it is a vital reservoir for drinking water for the City of San Luis Obispo.

The Army Corps took it from the Army in 1955 and the County shortly after that took over operations and maintenance but not ownership.

USACE and SLO jointly hold water rights to the dam, with SLO having rights to 45,000 acre feet of water. The County Flood Control District operates it for the city and has recreational opportunities at Santa Margarita Lake.

The dam is 135 feet high, and is built to withstand a maximum, theoretical capacity of 26,000 a.f., and a maximum water level of 1,300 feet. The lake's surface area is 730 acres and the lake drains an area of 112-square miles.

The dam's original design called for spillway gates to be installed, which never happened, but if it were to be done, could raise the lake level another 19 feet, from the current capacity of

23,800 a.f. to 41,792, according to the "Proposed Salinas Reservoir Expansion Project" report from 1998.

"The expansion of the dam," reads a County report, "is a potential opportunity for securing additional water supplies and has been identified in the County's 2019 Legislative Platform and the Paso Robles Sub-basin Groundwater Sustainability Plan."

The USACE in 2018 started a "Disposition Study" to identify options for the dam's future, among them to hand over ownership of the dam to a local agency.

"The Disposition Study includes coordination with local agencies to understand and compare the costs, benefits, and impacts of various alternatives." The study is now at the point where the Army Corps wants to know if the County is interested in acquiring the dam.

"Additionally," reads the staff report, "the House of Representatives passed a bill on July 29, 2020, which directs the Secretary of the Army to expedite completion of the Disposition Study."

Angela Ford, a water resources engineer with the Flood Control District, said other options include status quo or transfer to a different entity, "if we weren't interested," she told Estero Bay News.

The USACE had tried to cut a deal with the City of SLO, she said, to no avail. "This is the first time the District has seriously considered it," she said.

The USACE has concluded that the dam "has some deficiencies" but those are "low risk" according to federal standards. "The USACE has indicated that the dam would need to be transferred 'as-is,' with the USACE only willing to consider providing minimal funding to support retrofit."

Of course the State of California won't go so easy. "The California Department of Water Resources Division of Safety of Dams [DSOD], has indicated that seismic rehabilitation of Salinas Dam would be required if the dam were to fall under State regulation.

"Any retrofit or structural improvements, including expanding the dam's capacity, will require coordination with and approval by the DSOD following the District's acquisition of the dam."

The Army Corps conducted a "safety analysis," Ford explained. It was considered low risk by federal standards, "but State requirements are different."

Indeed, if the District does take the dam over, the State retrofit requirements kick in automatically, no matter if the spillway gates are installed.

"Transferring ownership and putting in the gate," reads a SLO County report (see: <https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Departments/Public-Works/Current-Public-Works-Projects/Salinas-Dam-Disposition-Study>), "is identified as an opportunity for securing additional water supplies to address needs in San Luis Obispo County in the County-wide Master Water Report."

Ford added that the District hasn't done any work to come up with an estimated cost to retro fit the dam, but there is a rough, "back of the envelope" estimate of \$30 million to \$50 million.

Who would pay that is another detail to be considered, though the City of SLO holds all the water rights. Also to be decided is whether the water could be supplied to other agencies or cities.

If the County wants to expand capacity of the reservoir, which Ford called "a conceptual potential" project, the spillway

gates need to be installed.

With Supervisors officially showing interest, the USACE will conclude its Disposition Study likely with a recommendation to turn it over to the County.

County staff said it needs time to understand all the implications with transfer of ownership, including costs.

Ford's report said, "To prepare for the next milestone in the transfer process, District staff would need to undertake efforts to provide informed recommendations, which would include understanding and defining the technical requirements to retrofit and expand the dam to meet DSOD standards, coordinating with the City to understand the permitting and water rights issues, developing a process to identify and engage additional project beneficiaries."

It's possible the dam could help with water issues down the Salinas River, including in the over-drafted Paso Robles Groundwater Basin, as well as water issues in San Luis Obispo.

The Salinas Dam and Whale Rock Reservoir are the two main drinking water reservoirs in SLO County and as such have special restrictions not included at the County's other two major bodies of water — Lake Nacimiento and Lake Lopez.

For example, there's no human contact (swimming) allowed in Santa Margarita Lake or Whale Rock, and motorized boats are also prohibited. People can fish from shore or off non-motorized craft but you're supposed to stay out of the water.

Nacimiento and Lopez both have extensive recreational uses including motorized boating and water skiing.

It should be noted that under State Law, all water coming from lakes and reservoirs or any other surface waters like rivers and creeks, must be fully treated to drinking water standards to fight such water-borne pathogenic microorganisms as cryptosporidium, E-coli, and giardia, among others.

## Work Starts on New Animal Shelter

By Neil Farrell

The County has started building a new home for wayward critters in a project that will for the first time use a new method of contracting for public facilities.

County Public Works broke ground on the new home of the Department of Animal Services last week and expects to be completed with the project in February 2022.

The animal shelter is being built on vacant land the County owns adjacent to the Woods Humane Society's shelter on Oklaho-

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A bird's-eye view and rendering from SLO County of the site of the County's new animal shelter that broke ground last week and is expected to be completed in February 2022.

ma Avenue.

It will be sandwiched in between Woods and a new 1.2-megawatt solar farm the County recently installed that will cut electrical costs for the new animal shelter, as well as County facilities like the Honor Farm and County Jail complex, among others in the area.

"When complete," reads a news release from Public Works, "the new 16,000 square foot facility, associated infrastructure, parking, and landscaping will replace the 43-year-old facility currently operated by Animal Services.

"It will provide an appropriate environment for the care of animals and for families to find their new pet(s). The new facility is being developed under a partnership between the County of San Luis Obispo and all seven incorporated cities within the County."

The contractor for the job is F&H Construction of Lodi, Calif., and this is the first project to be delivered by the County using the "Design-Build" project delivery method. F&H Const., was awarded a \$15.2 million contract last May.

The contract award included a budget adjustment up to \$20.3 million for the overall project, up from the original \$13-million estimate. Add in financing costs of \$326,000 and the grand total topped \$20.6 million as of last May.

All the cities in SLO County contract with the County for animal services including animal welfare law enforcement duties and will split the costs for the new shelter based on how much each city contributes to the animal overpopulation problem, i.e. the number of captured dogs and cats that come into the shelter.

But County Supervisors voted to take on an additional \$1 million of the costs above the pro rata share in order to bring some rogue cities like Paso Robles, Atascadero and Arroyo Grande — back into the joint powers agreement, after they voted to investigate building their own shelters. But they all eventually realized building and operating a separate animal shelter was too expensive.

Last May, County Administrative Officer Wade Horton said in a news release, "This project shows how our local governments can come together to meet a community need. We don't need an extravagant facility, but one that will serve all communities in SLO County well into the future."

If readers want to track the project go to: [www.slocounty.ca.gov/AnimalFacilitiesProject](http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/AnimalFacilitiesProject).

## No Changes in Election Winners

By Neil Farrell

As ballot counting in San Luis Obispo County winds down, the Morro Bay Mayor's race has tightened considerably, while there've been lesser changes in the race for two council seats.

The count as of Nov. 9 had Mayor John Headding leading challenger John Weiss 50.83% to 49.17%, with the vote count standing at 3,387 for Headding to 3,277 for Weiss, a difference of 110 votes between them in a rematch from the 2018 election.

On Election Night, Headding led Weiss by 290 votes — 2,764 to 2,474 (52.76% to 47.22%).

In Morro Bay as of the 12th, there were 77 vote-by-mail and 73 provisional ballots left. Weiss would have to greatly dominate those final ballots to pull out a Cinderella-story, upset win.

In any event, this is shaping up to be among the closest mayoral elections in town history. In 2018, the same two men battled it out to a 52% for Headding and 48% for Weiss split decision.

Councilman Robert "Red" Davis lost a little ground on his Election Night lead but looks to be heading for a second 4-year term. Davis had 28.02% (2,528 votes) at the end of the night on Nov. 3 and on Nov. 12, he stood at 27.64% (3,132).

Laurel Barton has also held onto the second council seat as she also dropped a hair percentage-wise going from 27.82% to 26.71% (2,510 vs. 3,027) in the latest count before deadline.

Challenger, Betty Winholtz gained some ground going from 22.56% Election Night (2,035) to 23.18% and 2,627 votes.

Richard Sadowski too went up a little going from 21.59% and 1,948 votes to 22.47% and 2,546 votes as of the 12th.

But with just 150 votes left to count, Winholtz' and Sadowski's runs have come up short.

In the most important race in Morro Bay, the Measure E-20 sales tax increase was approved with 58.57% "Yes" to 41.43% "No" (4,010 votes to 2,837), with 6,499 total votes counted, some 88.01% of the registered voters.

So in 2021 Morro Bay's local sales tax rate will go from one-half percent to 1.5 percent, a change that is anticipated to bring into the city treasury about \$2 million a year, given a normal economy and not one locked down by the coronavirus pandemic response.

Incumbent 24th District Congressman Salud Carbajal outpaced challenger Andy Caldwell in SLO County 53.80% (81,699) to 46.20% (70,156). The 24th District also includes Santa Barbara County and a slice of coastal Ventura County, a map that could be redrawn soon, now that the Census is winding down and redistricting to come soon.

Caldwell closed the Election Night gap considerably going

from being down 58.43% to 41.57% to the final 53.8-46.2.

In the Cayucos Sanitary District, Hannah Millar and Bob Enns retained their seats against challenger, John Drayer. The scorecard was Millar 43.86% and 1,096 votes; Enns 40.98% and 1,024; and Drayer 15.17%, 379.

Some 1,796 votes were cast out of 2,057 registered voters, an 87.31% turnout. Also, 1,697 voters mailed in ballots and 99 voted in person.

In the Cambria CSD race, Harry Farmer, Karen Dean and Tom Gray appear to have won the three open seats. Farmer had 30.16% and 2,486 votes; Dean got 27.21% and 2,243; with Gray getting 22.47%, 1,852. David Pierson finished out of the running but had a pretty good showing with 20.15% of the votes (1,661).

Cambria CSD race had 4,044 votes cast of the 4,498 voters, 89.91%. Some 3,794 mailed in ballots and 250 voted in person.

If the numbers seem wonky, it's because in Cambria, 3,809 ballots didn't have all three possible votes marked, so-called under-votes (the race was "vote for 3").

John Laird was SLO County's pick for State Senate in the 17th District race with Vicki Nohrden. Laird took 78,197 votes (52.63%) to Nohrden's 47.37% (70,371). Laird's victory here resounded throughout the 17th District and he will return to the State Legislature after a tenure as Resources Secretary.

And Jordan Cunningham will return to the State Assembly winning re-election to the 35th District seat over challenger Dawn Addis. Cunningham had 54.64% of the votes (82,206) to Addis' 45.36% (68,255).

Addis remains on the Morro Bay City Council where she has 2-more years before her term comes up again. The 34th District seat will also be up again.

## Board Approves Funding for Camp Cleanup

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

The County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved funding of up to \$10,000 to pay for the cleanup up of a homeless encampment on county-owned property in Los Osos.

Following multiple reports of human waste, syringes, public safety, and possible fire threats in the area surrounding the library, the county began efforts to relocate an estimated dozen unsheltered community members in early October.

"It was a substantial services, outreach effort," Kate Ballantyne, deputy director of the Department of Public Works told Estero Bay News. "We made sure that everyone was cleared to go to 40 Prado [Homeless Services Center]. Everyone was eligible to go but not everybody wanted to. They were provided the opportunity for transportation and clearance. The County also offered personal property storage, and a few people did take us up on that. So we are storing their belongings for 90 days."

Additionally, several people living at the site cleaned up their own trash helping fill a 40 cubic yard dumpster. The price tag is expected to come in at less than \$10,000 to pay the cleanup contractor and for trash hauling purposes.

Camp Cleanup Continued on page 4



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## Camp Cleanup From page 3

"We haven't gotten all of the invoices in yet," Ballantyne said. We're expecting to do a full count next week for the final numbers, but we think it'll be far below \$10,000 for the vendors."

The allocated money is from District 2 Community Project Funds.

The 12-acre property is the site of the Los Osos Waste Water project, which is where Public Works comes in as the lead agency in the so-called Midtown Los Osos Encampment Clean-Up Project. The department administers various water and wastewater wholesale and retail facilities throughout the county.

During the state and federal permitting process for the wastewater project, the County agreed to restore the site and permanently protect it. Since 2012, restoration staff and biologists have worked to restore native plant species, control erosion, remove weeds, and create designated pathways for safe public access.

"The County does not have flexibility to modify permit restrictions at the site and plans to begin site restoration and re-stabilization efforts ahead of the winter rainy season," County officials said in a news release. "In recent weeks, an interdisciplinary task force of County staff has collaborated to address the complex humanitarian, environmental, and civil issues associated with cleaning up the Midtown site."

During the remote Nov. 3 BOS meeting, Linde Owen, who serves on the Los Osos Land Use Committee, said the county took too long to respond to the situation resulting in increased costs.

"Waiting three to four months, then increased the cost of the cleanup," Owen said via phone during the meeting. "I just feel that it was negligent in waiting so long to do the same thing that you could have done at the beginning. It highly impacted the activities of the community trying to use the library and created basically infrastructure that needed to all be removed after they were allowed to stay there for so long."

Owen did suggest another solution.

"The problem continues to grow. So rather than throw \$10,000 [at it] every time you clean up a mess, I would like to see some direction towards purchasing property and beginning to set something permanent up."

Julie Tacker, who is also on the Los Osos Land Use Committee, expressed concerns that the homeless "activity has already returned" and that ratepayers will have to pay the price for future cleanup efforts.

"My largest concern is that there will be other charges," she said via phone. "The Los Osos Wastewater Project, as a condition of approval has to maintain that property into a pristine habitat, and that has come at great cost to the sewer ratepayers. It's simply unfair, that because of this activity, and the lack of policing that didn't go on or won't go on, that any charges be attributed or passed on to the wastewater project and the customers. I know the \$10,000, today, is not something the wastewater project customers have to pay for, but any prior charges, or any future charges, absolutely should not hit the ratepayers of the wastewater project. I'd like you to keep an eye on that."

Ballantyne said that there will be continued monitoring of the site by the Sheriff's Office and the county's restorations specialists, the perimeter fence has been repaired and signage is in place, all of which would help prevent establishment of another encampment from.

A team of people from social services, the parks department, the Sheriff's Office Community Action Team, Library Services, California Fish and Wildlife, the departments of Social Services and Behavioral Health and the Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo worked with Public Works on the Mid-Town

project.

According to the Homeless Policy Research Institute, homelessness in California increased by more than 22% over the last decade. Between 2018 and 2019, homelessness in California increased by over 16%.

## Deputies Show Restraint in Arrest of Second, Mentally Ill Man

By Neil Farrell

Sheriff's deputies for the second time within a month, detained a mentally disturbed man who charged at them, subduing the suspect using "less-than-lethal" force in a case that could have resulted in a fatal shooting.

According to a news release, at about 6 a.m. Friday, Oct. 30, deputies responded to a "check the welfare" request at a senior living apartment complex in the 2800 block of Ramada Dr. in rural Paso Robles that involved "erratic behavior" of the grandson of one of the residents, fearing he was in the throes of a mental breakdown.

"When deputies arrived," said Sheriff's spokesman Tony Cipolla, "the man ran into the apartment and barricaded himself inside armed with a knife. The grandmother had left the apartment shortly before deputies arrived."

The other residents of the complex were advised to shelter inside their homes and for the next 3 hours, Sheriff's deputies and mental health workers, tried to negotiate with the man, who Cipolla said was very agitated.

"At one point," Cipolla said, "he broke the front window of the apartment and began throwing items out of it, including a TV set. Negotiations continued for approximately another hour."

Cipolla said the suspect suddenly "jumped through the broken window and charged toward a deputy with a knife. Deputies deployed less-lethal beanbag rounds."

The beanbags hit the man but didn't stop him. When he again charged deputies with the knife, a highway patrolman on scene used a taser to subdue the man who wasn't quite finished, as Cipolla said he threw his knife at a deputy but caused no injuries.

The suspect, identified as Jefferey Alan Gomez, 30 of Paso Robles was treated for cuts to his face and body, reportedly caused by jumping through the broken window.

Gomez was treated by paramedics on scene and charged with suspicion of assault with a deadly weapon on a police officer. He was to receive mental health care in Jail.

The incident is the second in just a few weeks where sheriff's deputies, facing a mentally ill man who charged them, used non-lethal force to subdue the person.

On Oct. 5, Sheriff's deputies arrested a Cambria man after he threatened to first kill his mother and then to kill law enforcement including a deputy that rode to the hospital with him.

That suspect, identified as Adam Helyar, 36, was reportedly seen throwing items including a wooden chair over an embankment in his backyard and was also reportedly wearing a home-made T-shirt that said, "Cop Killer" on the front.

Helyar reportedly twice charged deputies who shot beanbag rounds at him and again it did not stop him. They were able to wrestle him down and make an arrest without hurting him. Deputies suspected the case was a potential "suicide by cop" scenario.

A search of the residence reportedly found several weapons within easy reach including a pellet pistol that resembled a handgun, two machetes and a knife.

While en route to the hospital, Helyar allegedly threatened to kill the deputy riding along and his family. He was charged with suspicion of "threatening a crime with the intent to terrorize."

## From Vilification to Congratulations

By Neil Farrell

A couple of years ago, the San Luis Obispo County Sheriff's Department was being vilified for its mistreatment of a mentally ill inmate, who died after being strapped into a restraint chair for nearly two days.

Now, the Sheriff's Office is celebrating a statewide award for its efforts in changing the way mentally ill inmates are treated in jail.

The Sheriff's Office and SLO County announced it had received the 2020 "Challenge Award" from the California State Association of Counties.

"In the category of 'Administration of Justice & Public

Safety," Sheriff's spokesman Tony Cipolla said, "San Luis Obispo County won for the Sheriff's Office Behavioral Health Incentive Program."

"This program is committed to reducing the number of days individuals with severe mental illness are in County Jail and provide them with tools to increase their positive social interactions and decrease their rates of recidivism."

How it works is "the program rewards inmates when they practice proper hygiene, clean their cells, assist in cleaning shared/common areas, engage in programs offered, exercise, attend mental/medical health appointments, and interact with others," Cipolla said.

The program has significantly decreased the number of jail assaults, Cipolla said, and has "greatly reduced the time inmates have been placed in isolation cells."

"We have made significant positive changes in our jail in the way we manage our mentally ill population," Sheriff Ian Parkinson said. "I am pleased we have been recognized by a statewide organization for this honor, which only serves to reinforce our dedication to this issue as we strive to keep improving."

Under the program, the Sheriff's Department reorganized where inmates are housed, gave staff special training and created specialized positions and also contracted with the California Department of State Hospitals "to implement a Jail Based Competency Treatment Program or JBCT, which is designed to provide care, treatment and services to assist patients in becoming competent to stand trial."

The SLO Sheriff's Department beat out a record 363 entries from counties throughout California, and was one of just three to receive recognition in the category.

The 2018 death of Atascadero resident, Andrew Holland while tied naked to a restraint chair in an isolation cell for some 46 hours and a subsequent multi-million dollar settlement with his family, became the main issue in the sheriff's election of 2018. The Holland Family spent a lot of money trying to oust the sitting sheriff.

Much of the public was outraged when surveillance video of Holland's ordeal was published by local media. Even the County Grand Jury issued a blistering report on the treatment of mentally ill inmates, including a lack of beds with County Behavioral Health for people in crisis.

Though incumbent Sheriff Parkinson defeated challenger Greg Clayton, it all served to prompt the department into taking action with its overall health programs at the County Jails and the treatment of mentally ill inmates.

Great strides have apparently been made in both medical care and mental health care at the County lockup. Though there continue to be deaths in custody, there has not been repeat of the Holland tragedy.

## Sheriff Arrests Florida Trafficker

By Neil Farrell



Dominick Alleva

The County Sheriff's Office arrested a Florida man suspected of human trafficking of a minor girl while he was in California.

According to Sheriff's spokesman, Tony Cipolla, deputies arrested the Florida man on April 28 at an undisclosed location in SLO County for suspicion of statutory rape.

The suspect posted bail and was released from County Jail. Cipolla said further investigation led to additional criminal charges being filed for suspicion of human trafficking of a minor and the possession, production, and distribution of child pornography.

Arraigned on the new charges on May 19, Cipolla said the man's bail was hiked from \$45,000 to \$150,000 and the man posted bail the next day and left California for Florida. But California

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# News

wasn't done with him yet.

Investigators later determined that the suspect "had violated the criminal protective order put in place by the judge in this case but due to his location in Florida he was unable to be contacted."

So Sheriff's investigators went looking for him in Boca. "In November of 2020," Cipolla said, "the San Luis Obispo County Counter Human Traffic Team, a team comprised of investigators from the Sheriff's Special Operations Unit and the District Attorney's Office Bureau of Investigation, travelled to Florida to locate and arrest [the suspect] on an outstanding \$750,000 arrest warrant issued by the San Luis Obispo County Superior Court."

With the help of the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office Special Investigations Division/Human Trafficking Task Force, they arrested the suspect, identified as Dominick Alleva, 21 of Boca Raton, Fla., on Nov. 2 for the warrant.

Alleva sits in the West Palm Beach County Jail awaiting extradition to California.

"It is anticipated that Alleva will be returned to San Luis Obispo County to continue court proceedings related to the underlying human trafficking case and fresh charges related to witness intimidation and stalking," Cipolla said.

Asked by Estero Bay News for additional information about the victim and where in SLO County the crimes allegedly occurred? Cipolla said, "We typically don't release any details about the victim of a sex crime except to confirm the victim was a minor."

So it's unknown at this time whether the victim was a local girl or someone from Florida perhaps who had been brought to California against her will.

Was Alleva the "pimp" (perpetrator of human trafficking) or a "John" (a customer), as both are crimes? Cipolla said, "The suspect was arrested for the charge of human trafficking so he is the 'trafficker.' The crimes occurred in our county jurisdiction, as well as possibly Florida jurisdictions."

## New Airport Chief Hired

San Luis Obispo County didn't wait long to name a new County Airport director, after its former manager left for a job in San Francisco.

County Supervisors on Oct. 20 approved the hiring of Courtney Johnson as the County's Director of Airports replacing Kevin Bumen, who held the job for some 7 years. Bumen left Oct. 9 for a job at San Francisco International Airport, according to a news release.

As Airports Director, Johnson will oversee the San Luis Obispo County Regional Airport and the Oceano Airport.

Johnson had been the deputy airports director since January 2019, and was named interim director Oct. 10 when Bumen left.

County Administrative Officer Wade Horton, said, "Courtney has been instrumental in charting airport strategic direction since joining the department's executive team. I look forward to what the future holds under Courtney's leadership."

Johnson will manage an annual budget of \$9.1 million with some 20 full-time employees at the two airports and "direct all activities at the airports department, including commercial and general aviation operations."

Johnson said, "I'm honored to have this extraordinary opportunity. Kevin is a visionary leader, who has built a strong reputation for contributing to the local economy and community. Succeeding him allows me to build on a very solid foundation."

In her previous job, Johnson managed the airport's finance, administration, and business development. She oversaw the airport's marketing strategy to promote air service and other airport activities.

Johnson earned a bachelor's degree in business administration and economics at Cal State Bakersfield and has "several years of experience in the airport administration."

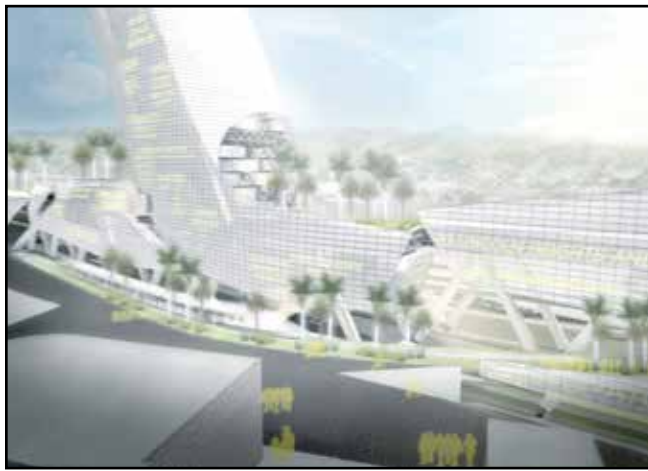
She takes over a County Airport with a new terminal that has added additional flights to major hubs, but it's also an industry that has been waylaid by the Coronavirus Pandemic response, and resultant dramatic drop in air travel worldwide.

"These are unprecedented times for our airport and the aviation industry," Johnson said, "and we are fortunate to have an exceptional team as SBP faces the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. "Together, we will continue to build upon San Luis Obispo County Regional Airport's successful history focused on serving the community with pride."

The salary range for the Director of Airports is \$126,504 to \$153,744 per year. Johnson starts at Step 1 of the salary range, some \$126,504 per year in salary and \$65,000 for benefits for a total salary and benefits package of about \$191,500.

Her salary will come out of the County's Airport Department budget.

## Poly Architecture Seniors Earn Honors at National Competition



Cal Poly architecture student Jacob Bodinger received an honorable mention with his entry, "Adaptive Infrastructures," which rethinks the concept of car-centric communities and supporting traffic infrastructure in Los Angeles by offering a system for repurposing highways into vibrant community assets reliant on energy-efficient electric high-speed rail.

Two teams of Cal Poly architectural engineering and architecture students earned honorable mentions in a national steel design competition sponsored by the American Institute of Steel Construction and the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture.

The 2020 ACSA/AISC Steel Design Student Competition offered upper-level architecture students from 56 colleges and universities across the U.S., Canada and Puerto Rico the opportunity to develop project designs using steel as the primary material. The 900 participants were from such schools as Auburn, Princeton, Syracuse and Texas A&M universities, Rochester Institute of Technology, and UC campuses including Berkeley.

The competition recognized 18 projects, in two categories, that explored a variety of design issues related to the use of steel in design and construction.

The honorees from Cal Poly's College of Architecture and Environmental Design were announced in September.

Jacob Bodinger, an architecture senior, was honored for "Adaptive Infrastructures," which rethinks the concept of car-centric communities and supporting traffic infrastructure. Judges liked his proposal for "its conceptual approach, which proposes a design that could be applied to many cities."

Bodinger said that America's love affair with the automobile "is driven by the permanence of our highway and road systems as well as housing built with a new understanding of range and convenience."

"Adaptive Infrastructures" proposes transitioning Los Angeles' existing freeway system to rail-based transit that would connect to hubs that also function "as centers of travel, commerce, industry and community. Each hub is constructed as a framework for the programs ... confronting new fast-paced and nomadic cultural and socioeconomic norms by envisioning programs as temporary installations amid a permanent structure," wrote Bodinger, who was advised by Margarida Yin, an emeritus architecture faculty member.

Cal Poly architecture students Solanda Magnuson, Alena Nagornaia and Amy Tang; and architectural engineering student Elitsa Vutova received an honorable mention for their entry, "The HOODOO," a proposed residential tower in San Francisco, which derives its name and both architectural and structural concepts from rock formations sculptured by the wind.



The second Cal Poly project was "The HOODOO," a proposed residential high-rise to be erected at 1 Oak Street in San Francisco, near the historic City Hall.

Judges were impressed by the design "for its esthetically beautiful and interesting idea as a formal strategy," they wrote. "The students present the building through amazing renderings and intricate steel detailing.

The interdisciplinary team of students included three architecture seniors: Solanda Magnuson, of Paso Robles, Alena Nagornaia; and Amy Tang and architectural engineering senior Elitsa Vutova. Their faculty advisors were Thomas Fowler, architecture, and Kevin Dong, architectural engineering.

The tower envisions 450-plus living units, with from six to 10 on each floor. The students collaborated on this 800-foot-tall skyscraper with SOM's San Francisco partners Leo Chow, architect, and Mark Sarkisian, engineer.

"We see the vertical community as the spaces along the void, which provide the street views as well as immersive views between the two towers," said Nagornaia.

Magnuson agreed. "Besides that, the vertical community spaces include smaller atriums for community interaction, conference and study rooms on some levels and a rooftop lounge on the upper floor," she said.

The building, which takes its hoodoo name from the thin spire rock formations eroded by wind in southern Utah, is made up of a pair of canted steel cylindrical columns that twist around the structure's perimeter. Two three-story steel outrigger trusses split the tower into thirds. The cores are tied together using these trusses, which are surrounded by a system of steel belt trusses.

According to Tang, the "tower interprets the wind erosion of a rock formation. Its shape responds to existing wind patterns and minimizes the influence of lateral forces."

As the architectural engineer on the project, Vutova added: "The geological hoodoo has a layered structure, with the strongest and densest layers remaining above eroded weaker layers. The tower structure adopts a similar concept, using the outrigger floors. The central void stresses the concept of wind and creates a vertical community space."

The top three awards in each category split \$14,000 in prizes. The 2020 student designs will be exhibited at the ACSA's 109th Annual Meeting in St. Louis in March and at the AIA National Convention in June in Philadelphia, and they will be published in a competition summary publication.

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# Community

## Reward for Kitty Cat Killer

By Neil Farrell



Wendy Kurczewski poses with Pirate, one of her two cats that were recently shot by someone with a pellet gun. Bandit the other cat, died from his injuries. Kurczewski is offering a \$1,700 reward for the identity of whoever shot her pets. Photo by Neil Farrell

Someone is shooting cats in Cayucos, wounding one, killing another, and breaking two people's hearts in the process. Now a reward is being offered for information identifying the pet murderer.

Wendy Kurczewski and Bob Schaum are long-time residents on Shearer Avenue, and somewhat famous for turning their home into a "Kitty Castle," with fenced enclosures front and back, and all around, too. It's a cat utopia where the animals can roam around, climb, and well, be a cat, until recently.

Kurczewski explained that about 2 months ago, one of her cats, Pirate, a large black tomcat, showed up at the house limping. There were no bites on him, she said, which might indicate Pirate got in a fight. But all of their cats are spayed and neutered, which tends to take the fight out of them. "So we took him to the Atascadero Vet Hospital," she said. An X-ray found that he'd been shot with a pellet gun.

"The pellet entered his hip," explained Kurczewski, who is a retired nurse from the State prison system, "and lodged in his knee." Surgery removed the pellet and they called the Sheriff's Office.

"He said he's been on this beat for 13 years," Kurczewski said, "and he's never been to this neighborhood on a call." The South Cayucos neighborhood, where she's lived since the early 1980s, has changed quite a bit over the years. Gone are many of her elderly neighbors, either having died or sold their homes and moved away. They were the folks who sought out Bob when they had little things that needed fixing or help with just about anything.

There are a lot of second homes and vacation rentals now, which she's never had any troubles with. A crime report was filed

but there wasn't much the deputy could do, except to warn his fellow patrolmen about the incident and be looking out for anyone out shooting a pellet gun.

Then on Nov. 2, the cat shooter struck again, this time killing Bandit, one of her beloved pets.

"It was about 2 in the morning when we heard this awful howling outside the door," said Kurczewski. It was 3-year-old Bandit, who'd wandered home leaving a trail of blood. "We realized there was blood," she said. "We wondered if he'd been bitten or hit by a car? There was blood on the kitty door and all over the floor, so we rushed him to the emergency vet [Atascadero Vet Hospital]."

The hospital determined Bandit too had been shot. "They did everything they could for him," Kurczewski said, tears coming to her eyes and disappearing down into her COVID facemask. "But they couldn't save him."

The pellet had clipped Bandit's heart and tore up his insides. "Normally, we don't go to extreme measures," she said, "but he was a young healthy cat. He was our pet."

Once again the Sheriff was called and once again a sympathetic deputy took another report. This guy was angered by the repeated acts of cruelty. Shooting someone's pet cat is a felony.

"They were very kind," Kurczewski said. "They said, 'Get us some leads' to follow, and 'This is not acceptable.'"

So she did something she said she's never done before — turn to social media, the Nextdoor gossip site, where she headed her post, "CAT KILLER in Our Neighborhood."

The many messages of sympathy and support she got in return were very touching. "People are very supportive," she said. They've offered reward money and to help in whatever way they can. "It happened late at night on a Sunday. This area doesn't have a lot of full time residents anymore. We've never had this problem, ever."

She explained that 6-years ago, she and Bob moved to Susanville, in the Sierra Nevada where she'd taken a job at a State prison facility. She was a nurse instructor for some 8 years and moved to different prisons. Her love of cats and the fact that every State prison has some level of stray cat issues, "I became known as the cat lady," she said with a smile.

At prisons like Avenal, CMC, Tehachapi she started programs to catch the strays and get them fixed to stop overpopulation. Having some cats around as mousers is a good thing for any large institution, a sort-of natural vermin control. But un-fixed animals can reproduce amazingly fast, with cats having multiple litters a year.

In Susanville, she said, they lived in a house by a bridge over a river. It was the place where people dumped cats all the time. So she started a non-profit group to catch, fix and adopt out the cats people discarded like trash. They turned her backyard into an enclosed cat menagerie, using straw bales to build a play and hide structure.

"Lasen Animal Spay/Neuter Assistance, Inc.," quickly grew in volunteer support and reach, bringing attention to a problem that is practically everywhere, abandoned or, lost pets living miserably, feral lives and reproducing exponentially.

"I don't know how many cats we spayed and neutered," she said. "People just kept dropping them off at the river — at our house. We ended up with a lot of cats."

The group was funded with donations as well as a lot of yard sales and cupcake sales, collecting bottles and cans for the deposits. It ended about 18-months ago after the group went their separate ways. About a year ago, she retired and they moved back to the Kitty Castle house in Cayucos.

And now, she's faced with someone nearby who is apparently into animal cruelty, which she said is not a desirable trait in any human being. The Kitty Castle works well but cats are escape artists and some of their cats are wild.

"We have some feral cats that we can't touch, but Bandit was

not one of them," she said. "Some of them will not come in the house at all."

And what a house it is, with enclosures front and back, with ramps that go up to the second story where the deck is also enclosed with wire mesh. Here a cat can be outside but not be roaming loose. "We've gone to great lengths," she said, "and then somebody kills them on purpose."

Pirate, who survived, came to them via the highway. "Someone found him on the side of the road and gave him to Bob," she said. The cat had a badly injured eye and so "Pirate" would seem like a fitting name for a 1-eyed cat. He's left with a limp but otherwise has recovered from being shot.

Bandit's killing led to them offering a reward. "Bob and I put up \$1,000," she said, "and people have donated to it." The reward stands now at \$1,700 for information on the identity of whoever shot their pets.

Most rewards require a conviction, but Kurczewski said they don't even care about that. They just want to know who killed Bandit. "So long as they ID the right person," she said, "I'll give out the reward. We're sure it was a pellet gun, which can do a lot of damage. It could kill a person."

Anyone with information on who shot these animals — one about 2 months ago and the other on Nov. 2 — they should call Wendy Kurczewski at (805) 602-8303.

"We're hoping that it's enough money that if someone's conscience doesn't turn them in, they'll do it for the money. Money does talk."

## Pandora Nash-Karner Receives Women of the Year Award

By Theresa-Marie Wilson



Pandora Nash-Karner received Women of the Year honors from Congressman Salud Carbajal.

Rep. Salud Carbajal recognized a Los Osos resident with a Congressional Women of the Year Award.

Pandora Nash-Karner was one of six women honored in the

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# Community

24th Congressional District spanning all of Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties and part of Ventura County.

"I'm feeling pretty overwhelmed by the honor," said Nash-Karner. "It is an even greater honor to be placed in such distinguished ranks as those of the past honorees, all of whom have made significant lifetime contributions to life in their communities and the State of California. It does take a village, and this award represents all the efforts of all those people over the years that have volunteered to help make our community and our county, better."

The Congressional Women of the Year Award honors exceptional women who have left a positive impact on their communities. Winners are nominated by their peers and span a variety of backgrounds and professions. Nash-Karner's work to preserve multi-use trails into Montaña de Oro led to her appointment to the San Luis Obispo County Park Commission in January 1991.

She was later elected to serve on the Los Osos Community Service District Board when it was formed in 1998. She has been instrumental in many successes including Celebrate Los Osos, a 501c that utilizes volunteers to plant, paint, beautify, build, repair, refurbish and maintain projects. Her other notable achievements include: Morro Specific Plan Advisory Committee, Capps Memorial Grove, Los Osos Skate Park, and many more.

Two other county residents were also recognized, Noha Kolkailah from Arroyo Grande, and Biz Steinberg from San Luis Obispo.

Kolkailah is the Assistant Principal of Academics at the Mission College Preparatory Catholic High School in San Luis Obispo. She founded the Peace Academy of the Sciences and Arts, which offers an enriching summer program for children ages 6 to 11, with a focus on self-awareness, global citizenship, social justice, and environmental awareness. She also helped start the Muslim Student Association at Cal Poly. In 2017, she organized a "Get to Know Your Muslim Neighbors" event attended by over 800 people.

Steinberg currently serves as CEO of Community Action Partnership (CAPSLO); a position she has held since 1984. She is an activist working to establish sustainable community centers with a special focus on youth and women. Steinberg helped develop the Adult Day Centers, Health Services, Homeless Services, and Energy Conservation branches of CAPSLO.

Other honorees included Kathleen Baushke from Santa Barbara, Tracy Beard from Solvang, and Dr. Anne Rodriguez from Santa Barbara.

"The recipients of this year's Women of the Year Award are all doing incredible work to make the Central Coast an even better place to live, often without the recognition or compensation they deserve," Carbajal said in a news release. "I am honored to recognize these remarkable, trailblazing women for their indelible contributions and leadership in our community."

Carbajal recognized the winners by entering a special written tribute for each woman into the official Congressional Record, preserving their stories and their impact on the community.

## Maritime Museum Has New Board Members

By Neil Farrell



New board members of the Morro Bay Maritime Museum Association were recently sworn in. Pictured on the top row from left are: Kendall Welch, Vice President Bill Steele, President Scott Mather, Charlie Yates, Katherine Gillen, Chief Financial Officer Bonnie Jones, and Chuck Stall. And below next to one of the museum's newest exhibits, a ship's bell off the Navy Destroyer USS Young is Jack Hunter. Not pictured are: Secretary, Dale Johnson, Gina Strong and Keith Kelsey. Photo by Neil Farrell

New officers and board members were recently sworn in for the Morro Bay Maritime Museum Association, and the new president said his life on the waterfront has now come full circle.

"I have now officially come full circle in my career on Morro Bay's waterfront," said new MBMMA President Scott Mather. "From my first job on the Embarcadero in 1972, running the Clam Taxi to the President of the MB Maritime Museum. In fact, Chris Vaile and Forrest Robertson, fellow Captain Clams were the first people I met on the Embarcadero — 48-years ago."

Mather said one goal for his turn at the helm is to complete planned exhibits and organize the Association's many items in storage, "so we all know what we have and where it is."

He praised the work of those that came before him. "After decades of work, the visionaries that started this endeavor have seen it pay off. We have a building. We have exhibits. We have a serious presence on the waterfront!"

Among the exhibits are several historic boats — the tugboat Alma, a 33-foot Coast Guard Rollover Boat, the Navy "Deep Sea Rescue Vehicle" submarine Avalon, and the Spindrift, a Monterey-style fishing boat built in the 1930s, among other exhibits both inside and outside of the Museum, which is located in the Front Street parking lot across from Great American Fish Co.

One of the newest exhibits is a bell off the U.S.S. Young, one of seven Navy destroyers that ran aground on Point Honda (Pt.

Arguello) in 1923, in what is still today the greatest peacetime disaster in U.S. Navy history. The bell was salvaged in 1958 by three local men — Ernie Porter (Porter Diving), Lawrence Thomas (Morro Bay Shell Shop), and Dean Tyler (Morro Bay Aquarium).

"This local trio," Mather said, "two abalone divers and a commercial fisherman, recovered 100-tons of red brass from the shipwrecks." The Thomas Family loaned the brass bell and it has been outfitted with a frame and plaque to display it. The Museum also has an anchor from one of the doomed destroyers, donated by Dean Tyler's wife, the late-Bertha Tyler.

New officers are President Mather, Vice-President Bill Steele, Chief Financial Officer Bonnie Jones, and Secretary Dale Johnson.

The museum association has had a tough go of it during the coronavirus pandemic response, having to shut down for months. And if SLO County's virus infection numbers keep growing, the State could push the County back into the strictest of the various levels and force businesses like the museum to close again.

Mather laid out a number of projects he hopes to get started, some of which are designed to make membership more attractive.

It includes establishing monthly "Coffee & Collusion Hour" gatherings as "A place for old timers and not-so-old timers to outdo each other's sea stories. Where members join in and revel in stories of the past and how it shaped the present."

The gatherings would include coffee and pastries from La Parisian Bakery, which is offering a discount. Other items include regular and discounted bay cruises aboard the Papagallo II, a monthly happy hour cocktail party at the museum, and more.

Also new is a video, produced by Mather's wife Lori, on the Point Honda Disaster that is now playing in the Museum and she plans to work on another featuring the waterfront's wartime history before, during and after World War II.

"We all share the same vision for our Maritime Museum," Mather said, "to develop a first-class educational venue, sharing our Maritime history with others. We want the Museum to be an asset to our community."

The Museum is currently open Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. but that could change if the State returns SLO County to coronavirus confinement. They also plan to be open the day before Thanksgiving.

The health department guidelines — facemasks and social distancing — are being observed.

If readers are interested in joining or contributing to the Maritime Museum Association, they can go online to: <https://morrobaymaritime.org> and learn all about the organization.

## Events and Activities

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Don't delay, tonight is the night. We could all use a reason to dance right now, and the upcoming Beats for the Bay Benefit Concert will get your toes tapping for a great cause. This show features Upside Ska, a full eight-piece band of veteran Central Coast musicians with a horn section, ready to keep you on your feet moving all night! They'll be playing at SLO Brew Rock and live-streamed to your living room on Nov. 19 at 6 p.m.

Tickets are free and donations are encouraged and will be

**Events and Activities** Continued on page 9

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# Police Blotter



## Morro Bay Police Logs

- **Oct. 31:** Police contacted a suspicious man at 7:33 p.m. in the 1100 block of Embarcadero. The scowflaw, 49, had two bench warrants out of San Berdoo and was cited and released, no doubt because he's so dependable.
- **Oct. 31:** Police responded at 5:15 p.m. to Lila Keiser park where they arrested a 52-year-old woman and apparent scam artist for fraudulent use of a credit card.
- **Oct. 31:** Police responded to the docks in the 1200 block of Embarcadero where someone on the fishing vessel Avenger had gone to meet Davey Jones.
- **Oct. 31:** There was a minor traffic collision at 9:22 a.m. at Ironwood and Paula. No juicy details were provided.
- **Oct. 30:** Police rolled at 6:17 p.m. to a disturbance in the 1000 block of Embarcadero. Logs indicated a 51-year-old twisted sister was nicked for getting fogged in public.
- **Oct. 29:** Police stopped a vehicle out long past curfew at 11:38 p.m. for sailing through a stop sign, even as it was no doubt the only car on the road. The foolish driver, 39, was nabbed for suspicion of driving schnockered, blowing a .16 on the butt-toast scale.
- **Oct. 29:** Petty theft was committed by some thievin' bilge rat in the 2600 block of Ironwood.
- **Oct. 29:** Police responded at 3:30 p.m. to the 600 block of Embarcadero to document someone slipping and falling into a possible lawsuit.
- **Oct. 29:** At 1:15 p.m. in the 800 block of Embarcadero police arrested a 39-year-old bent fellow for suspicion of getting squiggly in public and "obstructing an officer in the course of his duties," that being to arrest his sorry self.
- **Oct. 29:** A 51-year-old woman in the 400 block of Quintana said her boyfriend pushed her to the ground and "forcefully stole her purse," and then drove off. Police are investigating ol' Prince Charming.
- **Oct. 29:** Police contacted a regular customer at the Lila Keiser Park and homeless shelter. The 36-year-old master criminal had a felony warrant and was sent to the loving arms of Uncle Ian at the County Jail.
- **Oct. 29:** Police contacted a woman, 49, at 1 a.m. in the 1500 block of Main and nicked her for several outstanding warrants.
- **Oct. 28:** Citizens in the 300 block of Fresno reported a missing autistic juvenile boy at 7:30 p.m. Logs indicated he was located and returned home.
- **Oct. 27:** Police responded at 10:22 p.m. to a disturbance in the 900 block of Piney Way. They arrested a 37-year-old apparently raucous fellow for public inebriation and booked him into the County re-education center.
- **Oct. 27:** A woman on Quintana Road told police her husband punched her in the face numerous times and then slammed her head into a wall. Police documented the incident.
- **Oct. 27:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 8:30 p.m. at Morro Rock. The 41-year-old driver was hit with a trifecta — suspicion of DUI, a suspended license, and violating a stay-the-hell-away order.
- **Oct. 27:** A 55-year-old man walks into the police station where he was arrested for being a parolee at large with a felony arrest warrant.
- **Oct. 26:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 11:06 p.m. in

- the 200 block of Beach. Logs indicated the woman driver was cited for allegedly furnishing alcohol to a minor. A presumably underage girl was cited for possession of hooch, and a male passenger was arrested for suspicion of drunk in public, contributing to the delinquency of a juvenile delinquent and a warrant out of Madera County, another case of arrive on vacation and leave on probation.
- **Oct. 26:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 10:07 p.m. on Hwy 1 at Atascadero Road. The driver, 54 of Morro Bay was cited for driving on a suspended, which pre-COVID was good for about 10 days in the hoosegow.
- **Oct. 25:** At 8:30 p.m. police stopped a vehicle in the 800 block of Main for some no doubt trumped up code violation. Logs indicated the driver, 21, was popped for suspicion of driving on a toot.
- **Oct. 25:** Someone found a wallet on the beach at Azure Dunes.
- **Oct. 25:** Police were called to the 900 block of Main where some bent fellow was causing a ruckus. Logs indicated police caught up to the dingus, 67, in the 500 block of MBB and he chilled in the cooler.
- **Oct. 25:** Police contacted a suspicious man at 1:30 p.m. in the 500 block of Monterey and arrested him for resisting arrest and suspicion of a hit-n-split.
- **Oct. 24:** Someone found two abandoned bicycles at Bayshore Bluffs Park.
- **Oct. 24:** Police contacted a pair of apparently suspicious women at 3:50 p.m. in the 1700 block of Embarcadero. A 37-year-old all star was nicked for suspicion of possession of drug paraphernalia and possession of drugs, and her 48-year-old apparent cohort was arrested for suspicion of having paraphernalia, possessing burglar tools and possession of drugs, showing the dangers of saving a little for later on.
- **Oct. 24:** Police contacted a suspicious woman at 2:30 p.m. in City Park on Harbor. She was tossed to the gaol for suspicion of getting stuck like chuck where the tourists can see.
- **Oct. 23:** Police responded at 8:25 p.m. to the launch ramp for a report of someone throwing junk into the bay. Logs indicated the report led to the location of a missing person, but apparently not to a littering charge.
- **Oct. 23:** Police got a report at 11:17 a.m. of a disturbance in the Morro Rock parking lot. Logs indicated they arrested a 32-year-old apparently cranky fellow for suspicion of being honked in public.
- **Oct. 22:** At 5:45 p.m. in the 1700 block of Embarcadero,

- police contacted a 41-year-old suspicious dude and cited him for alleged possession of drug paraphernalia, his stash apparently already shot.
- **Oct. 22:** Someone stole a purse out of a junk, uh... make that "collectibles" business in the 200 block of Morro Bay Blvd.
- **Oct. 22:** Someone burglarized a car parked in the 1200 block of Embarcadero, as the tourist tax gets levied on folks camping in the City's bayside Shang-rah-la.
- **Oct. 22:** Police responded to a senior home on Teresa Drive where an 82-year old dementia patient reportedly "slapped two elderly residents."
- **Oct. 21:** Police responded at 4:15 p.m. to a car crash at Main and the Boulevard, no doubt the most excitement Downtown in some time.
- **Oct. 21:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle that committed "multiple traffic violations" at 9:52 a.m. in the 1100 block of Embarcadero. According to logs, the woman driver, 51, was arrested for suspicion of possessing paraphernalia, a forged car registration, possessing a switchblade, and driving on a suspended license. When searching the car, police allegedly found suspected stolen property that reportedly connects her to a recent burglary. She was tossed into the pokey.
- **Oct. 21:** Police are investigating a suspected case of "inappropriate touching in the workplace."
- **Oct. 21:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at the highly suspect hour of 1:23 a.m. on Hwy 1 at Morro Bay Blvd. The 32-year-old fellow was nicked for suspicion of driving half cut behind the wheel on hooch and hooter.
- **Oct. 20:** Police towed a car from the 400 block of Anchor because the owner hadn't given the DMV a pound of flesh in over 6 months.
- **Oct. 20:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 12:47 a.m. at Quintana and South Bay. Logs indicated the 46-year-old woman driver was fitted with steel bracelets for driving on a suspended license, while cranked up too, plus she had a warrant on a prior possession of meth case.
- **Oct. 19:** Police are investigating a car burglary in the 100 block of Atascadero Road.
- **Oct. 19:** Police contacted a suspicious chap at 3:30 p.m. at Lila Keiser Park. The man, 28, was arrested for suspicion of possessing drugs and paraphernalia and was taken to the police station, cited and released to no doubt go get high again.

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# Community

Events and Activities From page 7

matched up to \$20,000. All proceeds benefit the Morro Bay National Estuary Program (Estuary Program). Register for free and donate at MBNEP.org.



**The Jewish Community Center of San Luis Obispo** will host local violinist, Brynn Albanese, for a one-woman, drive-in concert on Sunday, November 29 at 2 p.m.

Brynn Albanese has been performing and creating for 15 years on the Central Coast. A well-known multi-genre violinist, she has been seen front and center as soloist and concertmaster with numerous groups in the area, including Café Musique. She has lived and performed around the world with groups from the Boston Symphony/Pops all the way to the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam. She makes Cambria her home now. Seeing that people were starving for LIVE music, in person, Brynn has created a one-woman show in the living room of her Cambria home. Let the healing begin!

The concert will be a COVID responsible event. Masks and social distancing required. Listen from inside the car or sit directly outside. Event rescheduled in case of rain. Suggested donation - \$20 per car. Limited to 30 cars.

For more information and to RSVP, please contact the JCC Office at info@jccslo.com, or call 805-426-5465. To schedule an interview with the musician, please contact the JCC office or Brynn Albanese directly at brynnalbanese.com.

• • •

**This year marks the 9th annual Paso's Lights of Hope**, a special fundraising event benefitting Cancer Support Community - California Central Coast. On Friday, November 27 more than 35,000 lights will turn on and shine nightly through February 20, 2021.

"The lighting ceremony has been canceled due to COVID-19, but the lights will sparkle through the winter season, shining light on our mission, "so that no one faces cancer alone," said Lights of Hope Committee Chair Elena Clark. "Our hope is that the lights bring joy to the community, while honoring cancer patients, survivors, and those lost to this terrible disease."

Eighteen trees will be lit this year. To sponsor a bulb, a branch, or tree and help shine the light on CSC's mission: "so that no one faces cancer alone," go to [www.cscslo.org/Support-Our-Work/Lights-of-Hope](http://www.cscslo.org/Support-Our-Work/Lights-of-Hope), call (805) 238-4411, or email mail-to:events@cscslo.org.

• • •

**As a reminder, Morro Bay's free Annual Community Thanksgiving Dinner** will happen this year, with takeout and delivery service and no sit-down dinner at the Community Center. It takes place from 1-3 p.m. Thanksgiving Day (Thursday, Nov. 26). Turkey dinners with all the fixings will be available for walk-up and drive thru service at the Community Center, 1001 Kennedy Way.

If readers are unable to get down to the community center, they can call (805) 225-5044 days ahead of time to request a dinner be delivered for free to your home by a police officer or community volunteer.

Also that day, the Morro Bay Lion's Club Foundation will give away another free car to a local person in need of transportation.

The dinner is sponsored by the City of Morro Bay, Chamber of Commerce, Albertson's Market, AGP Video, Casa de Flores, Dorn's Restaurant, Mi Casa Restaurant, MBPD officers and community volunteers, the Odd Fellows Lodge, Morro Bay Maritime Museum and the Lion's Club Foundation, with support from Team Castle volunteers.

The dinner normally feeds around 500 people between the dinner and deliveries, with leftovers being served at the weekly Monday Night free dinner at the Vet's Hall.



**The Morro Bay Art Association** is showing its annual "Winter Faire & Juried Craft Show, now thorough Jan. 4 at Art Center Morro Bay, 835 Main St.

The show has paintings, photography and fine crafts, over a variety of artistic mediums from traditional to contemporary. The sale includes crafts in fiber, wood, glass, sculpture, pottery, jewelry and more. This event is free and open to the public.

Art Center Morro Bay is open from noon to 4 p.m. Wednesdays-Mondays. See: [www.artcentermorrobay.com](http://www.artcentermorrobay.com) for more information. Artwork image is courtesy of Richard Ristine.

• • •

**Meade Canine Rescue** is putting on the best dog-gone, tail-wagging 3-day Holiday Extravaganza Sale in Morro Bay, November 27- 29 (Fri, Sat, Sun) from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., at 1340 Atascadero Road (the little house next to "The Lodge") in Morro Bay. Come rustle through a winter wonderland of new ornaments, trees, wreaths, garlands, decorative holiday items and much, much more generously donated by The Apple Farm in San Luis Obispo. New items at 75% off retail price! All proceeds benefit Meade Canine Rescue Foundation, an all-volunteer 501c(3), helping dogs and cats in the county and beyond. Have fun while shopping and support a great cause this year while decorating your home for the holidays. Wear a mask and bring a shopping bag. If you have any

questions, phone 805-235-1924 or email 4dots@att.net. For more information, go to at: <https://www.meadecaninerescue.net>.

Send your event listing at least three weeks in advance to Editor@EsteroBayNews.com. Make sure to include the who, what, why, where and when of the event and contact information. Please, type out in paragraph form rather than attaching flyers.

## The Buoy Bobs Up on Quintana Road

Photo and Story By Neil Farrell



Brian Rozario, owner of The Buoy, has reopened his neighborhood bar at a new location, 850 Quintana Rd.

**T**he Buoy, one of Morro Bay's favorite watering holes, has bobbed up again at a new location after being sunk for over two years.

Brian Rozario has reopened The Buoy, formerly on North Main Street, in a new location at 850 Quintana Rd., filling a long-time restaurant space that over the years has been home to Denny's, Bob's Big Boy and most recently, The Grill Hut but has been vacant for some time.

Rozario's new location takes Buoy from one of the smallest to one of the largest watering holes in town, with tons of space and a beautiful long bar to belly up to.

But though his official capacity is 116, under the State's coronavirus pandemic restrictions he can only use 25% of the space, in what has to be a tough time to open a bar.

He's only allowed 29 people at a time right now, Rozario explained while standing behind the bar stocked with every kind of spirit.

But the bar looks great, with lots of light coming in through the windows and tons of space, so once the Governor's lockdown ends, it should turn into a nice place to have an adult beverage and relax.

He is offering a limited menu of traditional bar foods — Buffalo wings, pizzas, corn dogs, poppers and some sushi rolls.

"I will have a chef with a regular menu once we're able to open up more," Rozario said.

Rozario had been in Los Angeles where he owned a travel agency and car rental business when he moved to Morro Bay in 2000. He was traveling back and forth to L.A. for work until he bought The Buoy in 2008. He sold his other businesses and operated the neighborhood tavern until July 2018.

He said he was going to sell his liquor license after the bar closed, but then he said the new location came open and he decided to reopen The Buoy.

His particular liquor license, a "No. 48," which is for a bar only, and that's why he doesn't have a larger menu.

There are only three, 48 licenses in town, he said, The Buoy, The Siren and Legend's Tavern. Most restaurant-bars have a #47 license.

Rozario's wife is classical cellist Nancy Nagano who performs with the San Luis Symphony and is director of the Youth Symphony. He said she came down and tested the acoustics of the new location and decided it was pretty good for music and given the size of the place, a live music would seem to fit nicely.

Rozario had a "soft opening" on Oct. 2 and, he laughs, with the virus restrictions, things are still pretty soft.

The Buoy is open from 2-10 p.m. weekdays and 2-midnight weekends. There is no cover charge and patrons must wear a face covering when they enter. Social distancing is also suggested.



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# Community

## Agriculturalists of the Year Honored

Agriculture is big in San Luis Obispo County with many farming families having roots that sink deep into the soil of SLO County's history. And being recognized by your fellow aggies as a "Person of the Year" is a testament to hard work, selfless sacrifices and holding a deep love of the land in your heart.

Long-time South County farmer Jerry Rutiz was named the "San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau 2020 Agriculturalist of the Year." Long-time industry volunteer and retired employee of the Mid State Fair, Lesa John, is the "2020 Cattle Woman of the Year;" and Steve Arnold was named "2020 Cattleman of the Year." All three were honored recently with Resolutions passed by the County Board of Supervisors.

Rutiz was honored by the County Farm Bureau for his many years as a farmer in Arroyo Grande. He earned a degree in crop science from Cal Poly in 1978, according to the Resolution passed by Supervisors.



Aggie of Year Rutiz

Rutiz, who is married to wife Maureen and the couple has two adult daughters, began farming in 1981 when he leased a small farm in Arroyo Grande "as a first-generation farmer."

Rutiz was one of the first local farmers to adopt the practice of direct marketing to consumers and was an innovator in using organic farming practices, according to the Resolution.

"As farmer's markets and the farm-to-table movement increased in popularity throughout the Central Coast and Southern California regions," the Resolution reads, "Rutiz Family Farms became celebrated for having a diverse, quality selection of produce." As the family's reputation grew, top chefs have featured his crops at high-end restaurants and his produce has been featured in the Los Angeles Times.

Today, Rutiz farms 28-acres of mixed vegetables, berries, and cut flowers near Halcyon in Southern SLO County. He sells his goods along with those of other farmers at a farm stand located on The Pike in Arroyo Grande.

John's honor was from the "San Luis Obispo County Cattle Women's Association," an organization that she has volunteered with for many years. She is also a 17-year volunteer with Sunshine; a treasurer for Honor Flights Central Coast; a member of the Cowbelles Trail Riders since 1984; and a Special Olympics Representative.



Cattle Women of Year Lesa John

She volunteers her time with the Cattle Women's Association at Cattlemen's Day, Pioneer Day Roping, Casino Night, Valentine's Dance, and beef cooking demos at Cal Poly and Atascadero High School. She retired from the Mid State Fair in 2014 after 22 years.

Jones lives in Paso Robles and "enjoys her time being a Grammy to her grandchildren and traveling to visit family in Washington, Oregon, South Dakota and Oklahoma," according to

her Resolution.

Arnold was honored by the "San Luis Obispo County Cattlemen's Association." He and his wife, Dist. 5 County Supervisor Debbie Arnold, work the Arnold Ranch in Pozo that was founded by his great grandparents, Thomas and Josephine Arnold in 1919.

They operate a cattle and hay business, a vineyard and winery on the ranch.



Cattleman of Yr Steve Arnold

The Arnold's two adult children, Joey Arnold and Michelle Pascoe returned to the family ranch after graduating from Cal Poly and along with his wife and her husband, went into the family business, raising beef cattle, quarter horses, forage hay, and producing estate wine for their "Vintage Cowboy Winery."

Arnold was accepted in 1989 into the California Agricultural Leadership Class XX, where he traveled nationally and internationally, according to the Resolution. He was active coaching youth sports, served on the Atascadero School Board from 1994-2006; and on the board of the Coalition of Agriculture, Labor, and Business (COLAB) from 2010-13.

Former California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger appointed Arnold to the Board of Directors of the Mid State Fair, where he served as President in 2010 and got inducted in the MSF Hall of Fame in 2015.

Arnold was the President of the SLO County Farm Bureau from 1995-97; served on the Board of Directors of the California Farm Bureau from 2010-16, and served as the President of the SLO County Cattlemen's Association from 2015-16.

He is a member of Rancheros Visitadores, a board member of the SLO Cattlemen's Association, and second vice president of the California Cattlemen's Association.

In what little spare time he has, Arnold reportedly enjoys raising cattle and spending time with his four granddaughters.



## Cambria's Chinese Temple Receives Historical Recognition

By Jill Turnbow



Cambria's Chinese Temple is one of the one of the oldest temples in California. Photo by Rachel Perzel

On November 6, the California State Historical Resources Commission met in Sacramento to consider nominations for federal historic designations. Cambria's Chinese Temple was one of the sites approved for the designation, which has been a longtime goal of Greenspace, the Cambria Land Trust that owns and maintains the property.

In 2019, a team was formed and, using funds from a Hind Foundation grant, they were able to submit a new application for the temple to be a "California Place of Historical Interest" and now that designation has been granted. Greenspace hired Rincon Consultants and Rachel Perzel, an architectural historian, along with Steve Treffers, senior architectural historian, to assist in developing the proposal. They in turn collaborated with two of Greenspace's past presidents, Richard Hawley and Wayne Attoe.

"This is a milestone for Greenspace," Attoe said. "Scores-possibly hundreds-of people over two decades had a part in this accomplishment. Cambrians and others have supported this project through donations, volunteer labor, and expertise. People have helped with mortgage payments for the property and purchased commemorative bricks and benches."

The California Dept. of State Parks released this summary of the project. "The small board-and-batten wooden building, constructed between 1892 and 1895, served as a central temple and community space for the Chinese community of Cambria and San Luis Obispo County. The building was relocated several times on its lot. The building is significant as a rare surviving example of late 19th-century religious architecture, significant to the Central Coast region where Chinese settlement was sparse compared to California's major cities."

It is unclear when the Chinese first came to the Central Coast but by the 1860's Chinese settlers were engaged in seaweed and abalone harvesting. Workers lived isolated along the coast so that they could be near the kelp beds. When it came time to socialize they would travel into Cambria and the Chinese Center. There were several structures in downtown Cambria established

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# Community

by other Chinese immigrants, mostly miners and laborers that served the community. The Temple became a refuge where they could practice their traditions and converse in their native language. But by the 1920s most of the Chinese population had moved to San Francisco and abandoned the Center and other local buildings. The Temple is one of the oldest temples in California to survive.

Greenspace has carefully restored the structure, sometimes referred to as the "Association House," and it sits in the Creekside Reserve at the heart of the Cambria Historical District. By the state recognizing the Chinese Temple as a California Place of Historical Interest, Greenspace will have more opportunities for grants and gifts which will enhance future events at the site and help with the maintenance.

"John Seed, Greenspace board member and curator for the temple, looks forward to hosting tours again when safe to do so, and to hosting more events like the Chinese brush-painting demonstration and annual festivals," Attoe said.

To learn more about the history of the Chinese culture on the Central Coast, visit [GreenspaceCambria.org](http://GreenspaceCambria.org)

## Covid-19: The Landing of Morro Bay, Another Small Business Survival Story

Photo and Story by Judy Salamacha

The Landing of Morro Bay reopened in March of 2017 with a new name, new look, and new ownership. Chris Ferrante liked the atmosphere the property wanted to become, but she knew it would be a lot of work. Although new to the area, yet in the hotel business for 30-something years, she instantly recognized and appreciated what made Morro Bay unique from other Central Coast communities.

"Walking the Embarcadero, I really liked the old fishing village feel of Morro Bay," Ferrante said. "I liked that fisherman still live here and the shops were often owner-operated. I could feel the history of Morro Bay. People were so friendly - people helping people." She decided during that walk the decor she would adapt. "I wanted a simple motif that reflected the fishing village concept."

With her contractor ready to go, they started the renovation in February. "We gutted the rooms and either trashed or donated the usable furnishings."

In 2016 she had been searching for another California coastal property intending to expand beyond the one she owned in Santa Cruz, Beach Street Inn. There were three available in Morro Bay, but the rule of commercial real estate investment is 'location, location, location.' The Landing sits at 780 Market Street in between Morro Bay's waterfront business district, the Embarcadero, and the heart of Main Street & Morro Bay Blvd. Across the street is Dorn's Original Breakers Cafe and when Ferrante first opened, guests could also walk across the street to D'Stacio's Italian Ristorante or venture down the wooden staircase access leading to bay-front shopping and restaurants or walk the other direction a block and find more shops and eateries. Indeed, the property has location.

However, before the season could start in 2017, Highway 1 closed due to mudslides. "It was a tough year but I expected our first year to be break-even, so I kept renovating," Ferrante said "We installed the new railings, steps and staircase." She exchanged the swimming pool for a guest social gathering area. She intends to do a project per year. "Always like to put some love into my properties."

The industry thrived in 2019. Both Ferrante's properties did well. And despite another major set back to operations with Covid-19 in 2020, she said, "Since reopening in late May, I'm only off bookings by 15 percent of last year. A boom hit in August and September. International travel is down 25 percent, but we are better than last year — not by leaps and bounds — but headed in the right direction."

Ferrante started working in hotels at age 24. Born and raised in San Jose, she graduated with a business degree and needed a job. She started at a Red Lion Inn in Modesto. She worked her way up from food and beverage to room management at numerous California properties.

"It was common to move around within corporate hotel chains," she said.

Her general management opportunity came with renovation duties at the 500-room Dream Inn near Disneyland. Once completed she moved back home to San Jose, met and married Scott Pinheiro, who had assumed ownership of the family travel agency in Santa Cruz. She purchased, renovated and renamed the 48-room beachfront property, Beach Street Inn. In 2014 she also purchased a hotel management company, an employee training resource agency for smaller hotels.

"When COVID hit in March I'd already been through

911, the last recession and the closing of Highway 1 (May 2017). When the Governor said we'd shut down a few weeks, I believed him, but it was months," said Ferrante. "It hit before we could generate any income at the hotels. Everyone was sheltering. The hardest thing I ever did was on April 1. I had all their checks and had to say to my six employees, 'Starting today you are laid off.' I cried. We hugged. They said we'll be back in two weeks." She tried to stay open for essential workers and family of those affected by Covid-19, but there wasn't enough to pay employees.

She closed May 1 and survived by applying for the SBA loan and payroll protection giving most of it to employees who were off work, and needed it for groceries. "May 15 all my employees were able to come back, but SLO capped occupancy at 50 percent. We had guests who wanted to stay, and I had bills to pay. It finally lifted in mid-June and July.

Meanwhile, The Landing like all the California hotels have had to adapt and invest in new protocols. "We now sanitize key cards and stepped up coffee cups in the rooms. We were already sanitizing in rooms. I don't think the industry will ever go back to operations as they were offered before COVID-19."

Comparatively, her Monterey County beachfront property is off 30 percent since occupancy was mandated at only 50 percent since Memorial Day "...and no end in sight."



Chris Ferrante, owner of The Landing in Morro Bay.

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# Community



A contemporary history of Sweet Springs and the naming of the streets includes families that occupied the area around the turn of the century — namely the Thomas Bush family and the Charles Ferrell family. The photo is from the 20s and does not represent today's image. The original building has no doubt been replaced.

Helen Emily 'Emma' Bush was born to Thomas Phillip Bush and Orpha Brandenburg in Mt. Sterling, Illinois, March 18, 1878. Emma married Charles Edward Ferrell, September 6, 1904 in Parsons, Kansas. The Ferrells came to California with the Bush family from Kansas in 1908 and settled on a ranch above Cayucos on Villa Creek.

In a Telegram-Tribune article, dated March 24, 1967, Emma said, "There were many Swiss in Cayucos, when I visited Mrs. Silacci. The children interpreted for us."

The Ferrells later bought 220 acres of land that included the Bayview Heights and Sweet Springs area for \$22.50 an acre. They built a cabin on Los Osos Creek about 1 1/2 miles from the main road.

"The road was a mess, just a sandy track with mud holes which the farmers sometimes filled with straw," Emma said. "It was red rock in the 1930s. It was a four-hour trip to San Luis Obispo in a spring wagon drawn by a team of mares, for the road through the sand would shame a good cow trail."

The Ferrells didn't live on this land, but Emma's father spent time clearing it.

Charles Ferrell and his partner Dick Sanders had a contract

to run the mail to San Simeon. In 1911 the men were driving a Duro car and purchased a second large 44 horsepower Apperson, to serve the thriving route. The Ferrells lived in San Luis Obispo where Charles Ferrell and his father-in-law (Thomas Phillip Bush), built houses on Murray Avenue.

The second house the Ferrells owned was in Baywood Park (Baywood Elementary School site). It was built by Dr. Hershey and Dr. Heim, two Swiss geologists, who believed there was oil here. They had 400 acres on both sides of the road. Four young men from Switzerland were brought to farm the land, but the men became homesick and left. They had trouble with the language and there was nothing here but sagebrush, sand and rabbits.

In the midst of the sage was a reminder of a subdivision attempt in the late 1880s and the remainder of a two-room building labeled El Moro Hotel (Baywood Elementary site). There was no longer evidence of a road to the two-room cabin. The Ferrells purchased it from August Vollmer, a grocer, who made out the sales receipt for \$50 on a grocery tag, that Emma kept.

## New Artwork at Los Osos Library



A new painting by artist Ingrid Goelz of Cayucos is now part of the Los Osos Library.

The triptych features images of Spooner's Cove. The wave in the background was a wave from January 2 (the anniversary of Ingrid's father's passing), and the poppies are March poppies.

Stop on by the library, 2075 Palisades Ave., and view the painting from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday – Saturday.

Photo submitted

## County Moves Back to Purple Tier

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

The county has dropped down a notch in the fight against COVID-19 and is back in the Purple Tier—the most restrictive in the State's ranking system.

"This is disappointing for everyone," said County Health Officer Dr. Penny Borenstein. "For weeks, we have seen a fast rise in cases here, across the state, and across the country. Our local hospitalization rates remain low."

One day ahead of the traditional Tuesday announcements, California Gov. Gavin Newsom said he was pulling the "emergency brake" on re-openings in a press briefing. This follows a statewide surge in COVID-19 cases as well as a local one.

"With every age group, every demographic — racial, ethnic — in every part of this state, we are seeing case rates increase and positivity rates as well," Newsom said. "It is no longer concentrated in just a handful of counties .... Counties that move back also must make industry or sectorial changes urgently. Instead of a 72-hour wait period, we want to see the application and implementation of this new tiered status occur in a 24-hour period."

On Monday, SLO County had 712 active cases of COVID-19 and the county's 14-day new cases averaged at around 65, the highest since the pandemic began. By contrast, in July when the county saw its second-largest surge in cases, active cases peaked at 481 and the 14-day average never rose above 46.

Of the state's 58 counties, 41 are currently in the purple tier. California is also strengthening its face covering guidance to require individuals to wear a mask whenever outside their home, with limited exceptions.

"We are sounding the alarm," said Governor Newsom.

"California is experiencing the fastest increase in cases we have seen yet — faster than what we experienced at the outset of the pandemic or even this summer. The spread of COVID-19, if left unchecked, could quickly overwhelm our health care system and lead to catastrophic outcomes. That is why we are pulling an emergency brake in the Blueprint for a Safer Economy. Now is the time to do all we can — government at all levels and Californians across the state — to flatten the curve again as we have done before."

As of Monday afternoon, State officials implemented these changes:

- Travel Advisory requiring 14 day self quarantine for visitors and returning California residents

- \* Tier assignments may occur any day of the week and may occur more than once a week when the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) determines that the most recent reliable data indicate that immediate action is needed to address COVID-19 transmission in a county.

- Counties may be moved back more than one tier if CDPH determines that the data supports more intensive intervention. Key considerations will include the rate of increase in new cases and/or test positivity, more recent data as noted below, public health capacity, and other epidemiological factors.

- In light of the extreme circumstances requiring immediate action, counties will be required to implement any sector change

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# Community

es the day following the tier announcement.

This is a snapshot of what moving back from substantial (red) to widespread (purple) will look like.

- Gatherings are permitted outdoors only with a max of 3 households.
- Likely retail business will need to cut their customer base by half.
- Personal Services (tattoos, hair salons, nail salons, etc.) will continue to operate as they are now.
- Fitness facilities, restaurants and museums will again be limited to outdoor activities only.
- Schools that are partially opened, or have a planned, phased, openings will be able to continue to do so, but it is strongly recommend robust testing program especially for staff.
- Schools that have already re-opened, if the county was in a less restrictive tier, do not have to close. However, if a school had not already reopened for in-person instruction, it may not reopen until the county moves back to the Substantial (Red) Tier for 14 days.

- Places of worship can meet outdoors only
  - Bars and breweries that don't serve meals will close
  - Non-essential offices can conduct remote work only
- For more information and current restrictions, go to <https://covid19.ca.gov/safer-economy/>

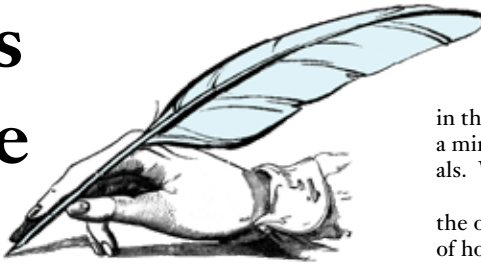


Okay everyone, the election is over, let's focus on cats.

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# Letters To The Editor



## Vacation Rentals Rule the Day in Morro Bay

*Editor's note: Last issue we published a letter from Morro Bay Councilman Jeff Heller that was incomplete. He sent us the completed letter after the paper came out and asked that we reprint it.*

In case you missed the most recent council meeting, Morro Bay's elected officials approved (4-1) a new short-term vacation rental ordinance after many months of meetings, discussion, and community input. While the ordinance was intended to "protect the quality and character of our neighborhoods", it seems to primarily protect the financial interests of the vacation rental owners, the tax generated by their properties, and the Coastal Commission's desire that there be a wide variety of accommodations available to tourists.

None of this would be a problem unless you are one of the people who live next door or near a busy, "non-hosted" short term vacation rental. These single-family homes typically accommodate 8-12 people for the weekend (or up to 30 days), along with their cars, guests, pets, toys, etc. The negative impacts of what many consider to be commercial operations in residential areas form the crux of most complaints. That, combined with the challenge and cost of enforcing rules and regulations, can make the "non-hosted" short-term rental a highly undesirable neighbor.

Many cities outside the jurisdiction of the Coastal Commission simply ban these kinds of rentals due to the deleterious effect they have on neighborhoods. Some cities accommodate these rentals by physically separating them from one another. "Buffer" distances (200-500 ft.) are commonly used for this purpose. Los Osos is pursuing a 500-foot separation. By the way, there is no buffer distance required in Morro Bay's new ordinance for existing short-term rentals. They have all been "grandfathered in" regardless of how many are clustered together as they commonly are

in the Beach Tract. However, in a nod to our neighbor's concerns, a minimum separation distance will apply to future vacation rentals. What will the future buffer distance be — 175 ft?

Another option available to jurisdictions is to limit (CAP) the overall number allowed, which is often tied to a percentage of housing stock available. I think most of us will agree there is a housing crisis in California, so the % of our stock that we remove from the potential long-term rental pool is important. Morro Bay's previous mayor and council established a vacation rental CAP of 250 in 2015 I believe. That amounts to 4% of our SFR housing stock. When added to our 20% of vacant 2nd homes here, a total of 24% of our housing market was unavailable to those looking for long term rental/purchase opportunities. So a reduced CAP was important to our residents and was much discussed in the various meetings. Several members of the initial "ad hoc" committee suggested a CAP of 120, which would be about 2% of our housing stock. What is the final CAP in the new ordinance? 175. 3% of our single-family home inventory. How will the CAP be reduced from 250 to 175? Through strict enforcement policies to be detailed in future resolutions, and attrition of existing permits over time. But first, the California Coastal Commission must certify the ordinance approved on Tuesday night.

Jeff Heller  
Morro Bay City Council

## Celebrate Walt

The last dream of Walt Disney, before he passed away in 1966 was building a unique city of tomorrow called EP-COT: which stands for Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow. Right after Disneyland was built in the years of 1954 and 1955, this plan would have been built right in the middle of Walt Disney World. Walt did not like how Los Angeles dealt with their freeway system during the time he was planning Disneyland, when it was being developed during the decades of the 1950s and 1960s.

The Wedway Peoplemover was under development at Disneyland for the unique Tomorrowland facelift of 1967. I really enjoyed this automated public transport of the future. Tomorrowland 1967-1996 was my favorite version of Tomorrowland, not the 1998 "Todayland" version that exist at Disneyland today while it is closed due to the coronavirus pandemic and layoffs that are taking place without Governor Newsom's help.

In closing to celebrate the 119th birthday of Walt Disney, this man deserves the recognition of being a dreamer for the 20th and 21st century under a real reality of preservation of great ideas.

Scott C. Presnal  
Morro Bay

## Slow Down and Save Wildlife

A few months ago a lady on Nextdoor started posting about a bear living on Black Hill. She posted about the tracks she saw near the trashcans and she spoke with the neighbors who heard unknown sounds nightly. Fast forward maybe a month or two, that same bear had a sweet cub and they were spotted in the marshlands right off South Bay. The next thing we knew, mama made her way up a tree in Baywood and was relocated to Los Padres. I wondered if baby bear would be found and relocated, or if our town of Los Osos could finally start living up to its name.

This is where the story takes a sad turn. Last Tuesday night I was driving South Bay and I saw something lying on the side of the road. I immediately turned around at the query trail trying to think it was just my imagination, it wasn't. There, just off the embankment, laid that sweet cub. I began to sob with gut wrenching pain. I couldn't believe that all the hoping and wishing I had done for that bear to survive here, was all for me to see it lifeless on the side of the road.

The point of this letter is not to offend or anger people the point here is SLOW THE F DOWN!!!!!! The wild fire season endured throughout the state and our narrowly untouched forest landscape make the perfect climate for new critters to feel welcomed here. How can animals survive if negligence while driving is far too common? I for one have slowed way down since May because I noticed more foxes scurrying across old creek. So, please, for the sake of the other creatures still with us, slow down, get off your phone, and pay attention to the world while you drive.

Gina Spalione  
Morro Bay

Please include your full name and town you live in on all letters sent. Although we do welcome longer opinion pieces, publishing is as space permits. Estero Bay News reserves the right to edit for length and clarity. Email letters to [toeditor@esterobaynews.com](mailto:toeditor@esterobaynews.com)

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# News

**Kidney Donor** From page 1

wait-list for my blood type is 10-years long and I'm scared I won't be able to live that long," Matt said.

To find out if you are a potential donor, there is a pre-screening questionnaire that anyone can take at: <https://www.stanfordhealthcarelivedonors.org/>. The questionnaire will ask for the recipient's name and DOB to begin, type in Matthew Duffy, 04/03/1983.

Taylor said the initial test takes about 15 minutes to get through and Stanford will call and mail information packets to those individuals that pass. Then there are several tests, conducted by Stanford to ensure sure the potential donor is in good physical and mental health before they are finally approved. The entire donation process occurs over a period of months.

The donor will not pay any costs during this process. Matt's insurance will pay for medical expenses and there are programs designed to cover other costs for donors such as time off of work or travel expenses.

"I'm not sure if there is any easy way to ask people to donate an organ," Taylor said. "It becomes even more difficult to ask a community of strangers because they have no idea who Matt is. But, as I sit here writing these answers, I'm watching Matt play with my daughter, even though he is sick and exhausted. That's the type of man Matt is, he will push through any sort of suffering to make this little girl happy. He is a solid fixture in her life, and she expects him to be here for the long haul. I can't imagine having to explain to my innocent 4-year-old girl that Matt did not make it. It would be utterly devastating for her and so many others that care about Matt."

For more information on becoming a living kidney donor, send an email to [otypesharingiscaring@gmail.com](mailto:otypesharingiscaring@gmail.com) or follow Matt's story on Instagram: @Shareyourspare.kidney or Facebook: Shareyourspare.kidney.

**Still King** From page 1

Wine grapes were second, but down 8%, according to Settevendemie, and totaled \$254.27 million. "An oversupply of wine grapes contributed partially to the decline in value leaving some lesser quality fruit left un-harvested," Settevendemie said.

Cattle and other food animals also fell in 2019 to \$41.07M, a 15% drop from 2018. "This can be attributed," Settevendemie said, "to lingering impacts of drought pushing ranchers to sell less cattle in an effort to rebuild herds. The number of head sold during 2019 was down 18% to 36,765."

Even vegetables dropped 5% in value and also saw a 7% drop in acreage, which neither strawberries nor wine grapes saw.

Field crops were way up, 29% ending the year at \$24.18M, with both prices and yields up, Settevendemie said. The category got a huge boost from Cannabis, as Settevendemie said after passage of the 2018 Farm Bill, industrial hemp was included in the calculations for the first time in 2019.

Nursery products — cut flowers and ornamental plants — stayed steady in comparison to previous years, coming in at \$80.55M.

## Top-10 Ag Products

Breaking down the Top-10 products: strawberries were No. 1 with \$241.43M, some 27.73% of total output.

Wine grapes were second with \$254.27M and 25.97%. Third was broccoli with \$47.65M and 4.87%.

In fourth place was the Estero Bay Area's biggest crop, avocados, at \$38.87M and 3.97%. Vegetable transplants were fifth with \$35.46M and 3.62%; and sixth was cattle and calves at \$35.44M and 3.62%.

Cauliflower was seventh at \$31.33M and 3.20%; with eighth

place was cut flowers at \$26.99M and 2.76%. Head lettuce was ninth at \$23.42M and 2.39%; with lemons 10th at \$21.37M and 2.18%.

The overall total value of the Top-10 was \$786.28M of the overall output of \$979M.

Settevendemie said despite the 5.5% drop from 2018, "2019 still marked the second highest annual crop value on record for San Luis Obispo County."

## Farmworker Shortage

A lack of farm laborers hurt the harvest especially with the fruits and nuts, which are heavy dependent on manual labor.

"The availability of labor and increased labor costs continued to present major challenges for growers in the area," Settevendemie said.

The biggest gains were in the "field crops" some 29% over 2018, largely due to good prices on crops like barley and grain hay, which is used for animal feed.

Industrial hemp added largely to the growth spurt as well, and is likely to continue to be a big moneymaker, if the County Supervisors ease up on restrictions and let the industry flourish. Marijuana growing for adult use isn't legal in SLO County for now.

## Values Down but Still Strong

Agriculture has continued to be a strong part of the SLO County economy. Even during the worst of the drought years (2010-17), ag values went from \$712.8M in 2010, with annual ups and downs growing to \$1.03 billion in 2018 before dropping back down to last year's \$979M.

Fruits and nuts, which includes both strawberries and wine grapes, and while strawberries increased and grapes fell despite an increase in acreage, the demand is predicted to remain high and potentially increase.

Settevendemie said, "The overall decrease in wine grape value can be at least partially attributed to an oversupply of wine grapes across the state, as California has reached one of the highest ever levels of planted wine grape acreage.

"This oversupply has led to some growers, such as those operating without contracts or those with blocks of lesser quality fruit, to forego harvest.

"This may correct itself in the coming years as overall global demand for wine remains strong, and many growers across the state are retiring acreage of their low yielding or lower value varieties."

Broccoli, cauliflower, and head lettuce fell a bit in value (5%) and acreage (7%), but remain strong among the vegetable crops accounting for nearly 50% of the overall vegetable crop values.

And, "Celery saw the largest increase in year-over-year value for vegetable crops based on a significant increase in pricing," Settevendemie said.

## Animal Products Drop Too

Animal products, which includes — aquaculture, eggs, goats, lambs, sheep, bees, bees wax, honey, milk, and pollination — as well as cattle and calves, dropped to \$41.07M from \$48.59M in 2018.

Much of that was in cattle, as the county had about 8,000 fewer head in 2019 than 2018, but the price was a bit higher, \$135 vs. \$131.

With field crops, under the category of "Miscellaneous" — that includes irrigated pastures, oats, safflower, Sudan hay, wheat, seed, grain stubble and hemp — saw the biggest leap in value going from \$3.41M in 2018 to \$7.04M last year.

And this was even with the number of acres in the category dropping from 9,708 in 2018 to 6,814 in 2019, perhaps indicating the value already of the hemp crops that have only recently begun to be grown.

## A Plethora of Diversity

In the vegetables category and crops under "Miscellaneous" heading, gives one an indication of how diverse the agriculture industry is in SLO County.

Under miscellaneous are: anise, artichokes, arugula, basil, beans, beets, bell peppers, bok choy, Brussels sprouts, carrots, chard, chili peppers, cilantro, collards, cucumbers, daikon, dandelion, dill, endive, escarole, fennel, garlic, green onions, herbs, leeks, melons, Mizuna, mushrooms, mustard greens, Napa cabbage, onions, parsley, peas, potatoes, pumpkins, radishes, spinach, squash, sweet corn, tomato, and tomatillo.

Focusing on avocados, acreage was up a little — 4,437 in 2019 vs. 4,272 in 2018; but down in tons per acre yields — 2.884 in 2019 vs. 4.608 in 2018.

Settevendemie explained that this was likely because of the avocado's unique feature of harvesting every other year.

Total tonnage in 2019 was 12,156 compared to 19,155 in 2018, but the price was up \$3,198 per ton, vs. \$2,409 in 2018.

## Fruits Also Diverse

Again under "Miscellaneous," the wealth of agriculture in SLO County also shows in fruit and nut crops — apples, apricots, Asian pears, blueberries, blackberries, Feijoas, gooseberries, grapefruit, kiwis, Mandarin oranges, navel oranges (a big crop in Cayucos), olives, passion fruit, peaches, persimmons, pistachios, pomegranates, raspberries, specialty citrus, table grapes, tangerines, Valencia oranges, and white sapote — are all grown here.

And among the wine grape varieties, Cabernet Sauvignon was No. 1 at \$120.71M; "red wine" was next at \$34M; and Chardonnay was No. 3 at \$18.88M.

## Fishing Totals Included

Commercial fishing yields were also in the Ag Report, though not included as part of the County's Ag totals.

Fishers out of Morro Bay and Port San Luis had a decent year, with a total of \$6 million coming into port covering some 99 different species of fish and shellfish.

A total of 1.69 million pounds were landed at the docks in both ports with Chinook (king) salmon No. 1 at \$2.42M, and some 339,200 pounds.

Sablefish was No. 2 at \$666,700 and some 317,500 pounds. Third was Dungeness crab at \$572,000 and 122,800 pounds, and hagfish (slime eels) came in at \$429,500 and 390,500 pounds.

## Diversity Praised

Settevendemie's report praises the diversity of the county ag industry.

"Along with the incredible abundance of agricultural pro-

duction in the county," he said, "comes a tremendous amount of crop diversity, with area growers producing nearly 120 different types of crops. Whereas some states across the country, or other counties within California, may be famous for producing a particular crop, San Luis Obispo County's claim to agricultural fame can really be found in its diversity.

"That diversity is made possible due to the wide range of topography, soil types, and microclimates that are found within the county, and those key agronomic factors blend together in an endless number of different combinations to provide ideal growing conditions for nearly any crop imaginable."

## Pest Control Efforts

But not all of the report is wine and roses, the Ag Department is also responsible for pest control, and they were busy in 2019.

Settevendemie said, "Our inspectors routinely examine incoming commercial and private shipments of plant material, coming from all over the globe, at parcel delivery facilities, nurseries, farms, and landscape businesses. Inspectors ensure that incoming shipments meet quarantine requirements, and that the received plant material is found free from unwanted pests and diseases."

Among the colorfully named pests the department looks out for are: Mediterranean fruit fly, Mexican fruit fly, Oriental fruit fly, Gypsy moth, Japanese beetle, light brown apple moth, European grapevine moth, European corn borer, glassy winged sharpshooter and the brown marmorated stink bug, among several others.

The department put out 5,240 insect traps throughout the county to detect the varmints.

With thousands of traps and tens of thousands of checks of those traps the Department reportedly found 34 light brown apple moths and one Asian citrus psyllid and eradication efforts were initiated.

## Weights & Measures

The department also has less-notable functions — checking the reliability and accuracy of weighing and measuring devices like produce scales in markets, and gas pumps.

They conducted a total of 5,451 inspections of "measuring devices" of which gas pumps were tops with 2,798 inspections. Water (856) and electric (805) meters were among the devices inspected along with water vending machines (129), gas vapor sub-meters (726), for an overall compliance rate of 90.2%.

The department issued 520 citations for violations and took civil administrative actions in 75 cases.

**Latest Contracts** From page 1

bids and ways to reduce costs, some of the reasons for the higher costs could be:

- Uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic;
- A challenging construction schedule; and
- Strict construction constraints aimed at minimizing the impacts to the City's businesses that are significantly reducing the potential daily production rates."

One of the big issues with the conveyance system has been the extended time that Quintana Road would be under construction, limiting access to one of the City's four main commercial districts and one of the busiest roadways in town.

## Budget is Busted

These latest contracts add to a project that is already well over the costs that residents were sold on.

According to the report, "This represents an increase of \$8,021,000 [or 6.1 percent] compared to the current fiscal year budget of \$130,661,000 presented to the City Council at the beginning of Fiscal Year (FY) 2020/2021."

But, "That projected budget increase will not require any increase in customer water and sewer rates. The current water and sewer rates have sufficient elasticity to cover the project cost increase, in large part due to the City securing a very low-interest 'Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act' (WIFIA) loan of nearly \$62 million."

## Rates are Holding

The new overall cost has now reached \$138.68 million. The original cost estimate used for a Proposition 218 vote in July 2018 was \$126 million.

That's the amount used to set a surcharge for the project's debt service at \$41 a month.

But even though the project costs are now \$12 million over that initial estimate, the City said current rates can still cover it.

"The current water and sewer rates [including the \$41 per month WRF surcharge approved through the 2018 Proposition 218 process]," the report said, "are sufficient to support a \$138.7 million project budget even without receipt of a Clean Water State Revolving Fund [SRF] construction loan and grant from the State Water Resources Control Board."

## State Loan Not Final

The State water board earlier this year approved the City for up to \$100 million in loans and also awarded a \$5 million grant for the project. But the amount the City will ultimately borrow from the State has not yet been determined.

City Manager Scott Collins told Estero Bay News, "The City's funding application/materials for the SRF is under legal review segment of the process, meaning we are getting an important step closer to completing the deal.

"We expect this process to conclude by Spring 2021, and I think the interest rate is around 1.5%."

The City has already accepted a separate, \$10 million SRF loan, and according to Collins, they've spent all of that money.

"The City could receive up to \$105M in SRF funding according to the Board that approved the SRF budget," he said. "But with securing the WIFIA loan, we would expect a figure substantially less than that amount. The planning loan [\$10M] will be consolidated into this new SRF loan, and yes we have submitted reimbursements for the full \$10M at this point."

The staff report said the City expects to borrow up to \$59M, which would be good news for ratepayers.

"If the City secures the SRF loan and grant," the report said, "the City may be able to collect less than the authorized amount for water and sewer rates, in essence, extending a discount to all rate payers in Morro Bay."

**Latest Contracts** Continued on page 115

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Tours From page 1



Dutchman's Landing leaseholder Paul Van Beurden (left) is interviewed by Chamber of Commerce CEO Erica Crawford for the Chamber's 'Property Walk and Talk' series being shown on the chamber's Facebook Page, see: [www.facebook.com/morro.chamber](http://www.facebook.com/morro.chamber).



Local realtor Lorraine Sterkel, at left, is interviewed by Chamber of Commerce CEO Erica Crawford, with cameraman Lorrin French filming for the Chamber's 'Property Walk & Talk' series. Sterkel represents the owners of 330 Morro Bay Blvd., the former home of Rio Salon.



A view of the inside of the former Rio Salon on Morro Bay Boulevard that is vacant and available for lease.



Morro Bay Community Development Director, Scot Graham, at left, is interviewed by Chamber of Commerce CEO Erica Crawford with cameraman, Lorrin French at right for the Chamber's 'Property Walk & Talk' web series. Graham was discussing the status of the former Bank of America Building at the corner of Morro Bay Boulevard and Monterey Street. The old bank, with the largest building and parking lot in the entire Downtown area, is considered an 'Opportunity Zone' with the potential to make a big change to the Downtown area's business climate, depending on its redevelopment.

building on that site with residential upstairs, and a storefront plus a public restroom downstairs, something the City had been trying to get in the Downtown core for years. The project met with citizen opposition and was denied.

Starkie noted that the space comes with dedicated parking in the Bank of America lot. "Most places on the Boulevard," Starkie said, "don't have their own parking." He said it could be a good space for a new business just starting up.

The tour moved up the street to 330 MBB, the former home of Rio Salon, which has been empty for several months after the tenant moved into a new space in Cayucos. The 1,800 s.f. space is owned by Ken McMillan, of Distassio's Italian Restaurant, which is down the Boulevard at the corner of Shasta Avenue. Horizon Real Estate owner, Lorraine Sterkel, is managing the property, which is for lease now.

It's a somewhat strange space, as several small rooms have been framed in that used to have massage therapy and other beauty services.

McMillan said he sees possibly turning the space into an indoor arts & crafts mini-mall, creating a series of 400 s.f. spaces for artists to sell their work. The space is \$2,200 a month.

McMillan said when he bought the building, which has two apartments on the second floor, the idea was for the space to become a working area for locals not for tourists.

Graham gave some information on the Bank of America space, one of the largest buildings in the Downtown area with by far the largest parking lot. The bank was closed when B of A consolidated its operations in a new building in Downtown San Luis Obispo.

Graham said the company is working on installing ATMs possibly at the Sinclair gas station, and once that's done, they will put the property on the market.

The property is a mix of zoning, Graham said, with commercial up front and mixed-use to the rear on Pacific Street, so the possibilities are plentiful, and the City considers this a key site for the town's future economy.

Towards the back and above on a second story, Graham said, there could be residential. "The City Council is interested in

that," he said, adding that the planning department has had a lot of people come in asking about it. "This could be a real energizer for Downtown."

Dutchman's Landing owner, Paul Van Beurden, showed the tour a project he is cooking up for the waterfront lease site that will make what he calls "modest" changes to the western side of the site, including removing an outdoor patio, now being used a lot with the COVID restrictions.

The plan is to add a small deck to connect with an old fisherman's wharf that until recently had been a working commercial fishing dock, offloading slime eels, until the market dropped out and the fishermen moved on.

A former processing room at the rear of the building would be turned into another retail space.

Van Beurden called it an "historic site," because of its history in the fishing industry. He and his brother Leon purchased the lease site in 1986 and undertook a complete remodel in 1993 that added a second building, now home to Dolphin Shirt Co.

They remodeled again in 2011, Van Beurden said. The project would complete a section of the Harborwalk and extend it from Rose's Landing through to Marina Square.

Van Beurden noted that a fish-buying operation, with trucks pulling in and backing out in that location, 701 Embarcadero, is no longer viable, and frankly dangerous with too many inattentive pedestrians milling about.

He's hoping if they can do the remodel, which needs Coastal Commission approval, the City can add years onto his master lease.

The lease was for 40 years, which seemed like a very long time in 1993.

But now he has just 13-years left, making the property less attractive to potential buyers for when he finally decides to retire.

He's hoping the City will grant him a sizable extension and restore value in the property, which is still in great condition despite being 27-years old.

Van Beurden also has two vacant retail spaces inside the Dutchman's Landing building, which gets a lot of foot traffic, as the restaurant is among the busiest on the waterfront.

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Naturally there's a catch. "However, a rate analysis will need to be performed at that time to determine if a collection reduction is feasible, and that analysis will be conducted and shared with the Citizen Finance Advisory Committee [CFAC] and City Council once more financial information is available on the SRF loan and grant [likely in Spring 2021]."

If rates need to be raised again, then another Prop. 218 vote could be required.

### Pipeline Design Done

The consultant working on the design of the conveyance system, Water Works Engineers (WWE), finished its design work last May.

It includes a new pipeline from Lift Station No. 2 (under the Front Street parking lot) through the power plant to another new pipeline that will run from Atascadero Road, parallel to Hwy 1 past Lila Keiser Park to Main and then out Quintana Road to South Bay Boulevard.

The conveyance system consists of two raw sewage lines, a water line and two return lines — one that will bring treated effluent back to Atascadero Road for disposal in the ocean, and a second that will branch off, again into the power plant property, to hook up to a planned injection well field at the northeast corner of the plant property.

It also includes two, new lift stations — one at the Atascadero Road plant and another on Main Street next door to Lemos Ranch Pet Supply store.

An existing lift station near South Bay and Quintana will push the sewage up to the treatment plant.

The contract may have been awarded, but the City doesn't yet have needed easements from the power plant owner, Vistra Energy and is in the midst of an eminent domain lawsuit to force the company to grant the easements. The City's assessment of the values amounts to \$200,000, which the City will pay Vistra, if it prevails in court. A judge could order more for the easements.

### Bid Protest was Rejected

The City Council rejected a protest of the bids by W.A. Rasic that claimed the bids by Anvil and Madonna were "neither responsible nor responsive," the report said. "The letter alleges the City must reject the two lowest bidders as being nonresponsive due to the two lowest bidders' failure to provide resumes for key personnel and non-responsible due to lack of qualifications."

So the City asked for the missing documentation from the two companies. "The City asked the two lowest bidders to provide the resumes required by the bid documents following the bid opening. Allowing late submission of this information does not provide these bidders any advantage over the other bidders."

### GSI Contracted for IPR

GSI's \$530,000 award continues the company's hydrogeological work on the project's IPR system.

Previously, GSI narrowed the injection well site to an east and a west location in regards to Hwy 1. The east site was near Miner's Hardware by Morro Creek, and the west site, which the Council chose, is on the power plant property.

The conclusions so far are that the west site could accept 800-825 acre feet a year; the existing Morro Creek wells can extract 1,200 AFY (391 million gallons) without seawater intrusion; and it is possible to have the water in the ground for a minimum of 2 months before being extracted, the standards under State Law.

Under the third phase of the hydro study, GSI proposed to design, permit and install the first injection well; prepare monitoring reports on the status of the groundwater basin; evaluate water quality; help prepare a Title 22 Engineering Report along with the project manager; and coordinate with the State Department of Drinking Water (DDW) on further modeling of the basin, for another \$530,000.





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