

Weekly ReCAP for November 22, 2019

Happy Thanksgiving!

Next CPC meeting December 2, 2019 - Note time - 4:00 to 6:00 P.M., at the Volunteer Center, Lewis Street, San Andreas.

Giving Tuesday Photo Contest through December 3!

To celebrate Giving Tuesday, we at CAP and the CPC are giving back to our fellow organizations and individuals who are doing the important work of improving their communities by sharing and highlighting their stories with our audience. Are you active in your community in any way? Are you part of a group or organization that advocates for human, natural, or economic health? We want to see you and your work! From now until December 3, CAP will be hosting a photo contest. We are looking for:

- photos of events and fundraisers that support projects that give back to our natural and built environments
- photos of open and natural space preservation, clean up, and enjoyment
- photos of wildlife, animal rescue and rehabilitation, habitat protection/restoration
- photos of gardening projects, local farms and ranches
- photos of community service projects
- Let's not forget photos and stories about the good people who drive these projects!
- **Get creative! Let's show our favorite local community non-profits some love!**

Essential Details...

- Don't forget to share this with your friends and networks so they can get in on the action
- The winner of this contest will be chosen on December 3 and will have their project or organization featured on our website and our social media feeds.

- Because COMMUNITY GROWS TOGETHER!

Photos can be sent via email at calaverascap@gmail.com or by following our [Facebook page](#) or our [Instagram feed](#)

November 23 – Sierra Film Festival – 6:00 p.m. at the Bistro Espresso in Arnold.

RCRC - The Barbed Wire – November 15, 2019

Rural Broadband Update

This week, Senators Shelley Moore Capito (R-West Virginia) and Jacky Rosen (D-Nevada), both members of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, announced the introduction of their [Broadband Parity Act](#), bipartisan legislation that would bring all federal broadband programs to the current definition of what the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) defines as high-speed internet (currently 25/3 Mbps).

This bill would ensure that all communities receiving federal broadband support have access to internet service that is actually at “broadband” speeds. Currently, there are over twenty federal broadband programs promoting access to fixed broadband service. However, some programs define an area as “served” when service is at 25/3 Mbps speeds, while others define being served as having access to much slower 10/1 Mbps speeds. This discrepancy in bandwidth speeds means that the federal government is often investing in inadequate broadband services. This bill will remove such inconsistencies in service and improve broadband access for rural America.

BULLETIN BOARD

Announcements regarding hearings, grants, and public comment notices of importance to California's rural counties.

\$100M Available for Disadvantaged Communities and High Fire Threat Districts Through Self-Generation Incentive Program

The Self Generation Incentive Program (SGIP) started as a program for incentivizing natural gas fired Co-Generation installations, and was modified to include Energy Storage a few years

ago. When the program was modified, the California Public Utilities Commission also added an Equity Budget. The Equity Budget is to ensure that economically disadvantaged ratepayer groups have a chance to access some of the funds by setting up a separate allocation.

The Equity Budget now has \$110M in available funding, including \$100M available for one of two uses: Energy Storage in Disadvantaged Communities; and, Energy Storage for Critical Resilience purposes in High Fire Threat Districts (HFTD), primarily in public sector applications.

The program is anticipated to start accepting applications beginning April 1, 2020, and the funds are expected to move extremely quickly. Local governments that are interested in applying for these funds should plan to have completed applications ready for submission by late March 2020.

On Wednesday, RCRC hosted a webinar to provide further information, and assist counties with understanding the tasks that need to be completed for an application, and the options available to help with application preparation. A recorded version of the webinar can be accessed [here](#). For additional questions, please contact [Michael Day](#) at (916) 577-1114.

The Economic Impact of Tourism on California's Rural Counties

After nine consecutive years of growth, California's travel and tourism economy continues to surge. Visitors pumped more than \$140 billion in travel spending in the last year, stimulating business development and providing Californians with more than one million jobs. Increased travel spending is leading to record-setting hotel construction and more than \$4 billion in annual investments in theme park, restaurant and other tourism-related infrastructure. These projects are creating secondary employment effects, generating high-quality jobs in building and construction.

Not only does tourism support the state, the industry is a boon for city and county budgets. Last year, visitor spending generated \$11.8 billion in tax revenue for state and local jurisdictions and was among the top three sources of funding for many counties. This revenue helps fund vital programs and infrastructure projects and saves California households an additional \$890 in taxes each year to maintain state and local services. That's enough money to resurface 17,000 miles of two-lane roads or employ 107,000 police officers.

It takes more than having the perfect destination to attract visitor dollars. For more than 25 years, Visit California's marketing programs have delivered billions of dollars of new visitor spending and helped establish California as the number one travel destination in the U.S. Over the next five years, Visit California will be building on this success by investing \$500 million in global marketing campaigns to ensure that the state remains a top consideration when travelers around the world are planning a trip.

Learn more about the economic impact of tourism upon your [county](#) and the [benefits of travel and tourism to California's economy](#).

Three Calaveras Supes Face Competitive Election Bids

[By Tori James](#) / MML / Nov 15, 2019

San Andreas, CA – It appears that all the Calaveras supervisors up for reelection will be facing competition come the March primary.

Calaveras County Clerk-Recorder and Elections Official Rebecca Turner provided an update to Clarke Broadcasting on Friday as to who has pulled papers to date and who has qualified for the ballot to far.

While District 1 Supervisor Gary Tofanelli has submitted the minimum 20 signatures, Turner says she is still waiting for his official declaration paperwork and balance of signatures or filing fee of \$593.84, his opponent Sharon Romano has run all the hoops and qualified for the ballot as of Wednesday.

District 1 includes the communities of Circle XX, San Andreas, Valley Springs, Campo Seco, La Contenta, Camanche, Burson, and Wallace.

District 2 Supervisor/Board Chair Jack Garamendi and District 4 Supervisor Dennis Mills, who both plan runs to retain their seats are similarly in the process. They respectively are facing challengers Laree “Ree” Garza and current City of Angels Camp Mayor Amanda Folendorf, who have declared but are still getting their paperwork together.

District 2 communities include Mokelumne Hill, Paloma, West Point, Wilseyville, Glencoe/Rail Road Flat, Sheep Ranch, Mountain Ranch, and Calaveritas. District 4 covers Angels Camp, Altaville, Salt Spring Valley, and Copperopolis.

Superior Court Judge David M. Sanders, who was appointed in June 2018 to the position by former Governor Jerry Brown to fill a vacancy left by the resignation of Judge Grant V. Barrett, is seeking to retain his office as is Judge Timothy S. Healy. Both paid the required \$2,138.33 filing fee and qualified for the ballot earlier this week.

Potential candidates have until Dec. 6 to pull papers and qualify for the March 3rd Presidential Primary election.

Under the provisions of the Voter’s Choice Act, which is under adoption stages in Calaveras County, registered voters can cast their ballot through the mail, ballot drop location, or in-person vote center.

With regard to the latter option, voters will have 11 days, including Election Day, to cast their ballot at any of the available locations. Two vote centers that will initially open will be joined by

two more that will become available for the final four days, including Election Day. Hours for the vote centers will run from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. with extended hours on Election Day from 7 a.m. until 8 p.m. March 3. Staff on hand will be available to provide access to Spanish language translators, help those with disabilities, and update your registration if needed.

California Hits New Record Low Jobless Rate

[By Tracey Petersen](#) / MML / Nov 16, 2019

Sonoma, CA — California's unemployment rate fell to a new record low of 3.9% in October down from 4 percent in September.

The California Employment Development Department released the figures on Friday that show the state added 23,600 nonfarm payroll jobs last month. The department says October's gains extend California's record jobs expansion to 116 months.

For a second straight month, the Mother Lode had a better showing than the state even though the rates went up. Tuolumne County's inched to 3.6 percent last month up from 3.4 percent in September with 780 out of the 21,680-workforce unemployed. Calaveras County's 3 percent rate in September climbed to 3.2 last month, leaving 700 out of the county's workforce of 21,610 without a job.

San Mateo County had the lowest rate at 1.8 percent. The highest unemployment in the state was Imperial County at 21.2 percent. Gains were widespread across several industry sectors with education and health services increased by 6,500 jobs. The biggest loss of jobs was in professional and business services with a decrease of 5,600.

California's record-low unemployment rate in October contrasts a 0.1 percentage point rise in the national unemployment rate to 3.6 percent for the month.

Calaveras County Counsel Leaving Post

[By Tracey Petersen](#) / MML / Nov 16, 2019

San Andreas, CA — The County of Calaveras will need to find new legal representation in the new year.

Current County Counsel Megan Stedtfeld is leaving the post next month for a new job in Yolo County but did not specify what position she would be taking there. Stedtfeld, in announcing her resignation, shared that it was a very hard decision to make after giving more than eight years of legal counsel to Calaveras.

Board Chair and District 2 Supervisor Jack Garamendi stated, “Mrs. Stedtfeld has been an asset to the citizens of Calaveras County. Her resignation leaves a void in our organization. Megan has been successful in her service to Calaveras County as I am sure she will be in her future endeavors. We wish her and her family well.”

Stedtfeld’s last day will be December 13th. The Board of Supervisors will hold a closed session during its next month regularly scheduled meeting to consider options for filling the position on an interim basis, according to County Administrator Albert Alt. He adds that the recruitment for a permanent replacement will begin immediately and it is anticipated the position will be filled by February 2020.

The next Board of Supervisors meeting is December 10th beginning at 8 a.m.

PG&E Head Gets Heat From State Lawmakers Over PSPS

[By **Tori James**](#) / MML / **Nov 18, 2019**

Sacramento, CA — The head of PG&E acknowledged to a state legislative committee that the utility had become complacent about power shutdowns.

PG&E CEO Bill Johnson testified and made the comments during a Monday meeting that also detailed a series of major shutdowns in recent weeks orchestrated by the utility that left millions without power.

These Public Safety Power Shutoffs, or PSPS, as they are called, were ordered during dry, windy conditions to prevent catastrophic wildfires in recent years of which some were triggered by downed PG&E powerlines or debris making powerline contact.

Johnson told the panel the smaller shutdowns persuaded company officials they “had figured it out.”

State Sen. Bill Dodd told Johnson the company’s handling of the large shutoffs has been “a big ‘screw you’ to your customers,” and had created “a real trust issue” with the company.

As [reported here](#), due to strong winds in the forecast, PG&E is planning to tentatively shut off the power again later this week although neither Tuolumne or Calaveras counties are currently listed among the 22 counties that could be part of the outage.

Calaveras County counsel Megan Stedtfeld resigns to take new job with Yolo County

Guy McCarthy / The Union Democrat / Nov 19, 2019

Calaveras County counsel Megan Stedtfeld, a key player in helping the county's elected leaders craft new laws like those regulating and banning commercial cannabis, has resigned to take a new job with Yolo County.

Stedtfeld's resignation is effective Dec. 13. Albert Alt, the county administrative officer hired in April, announced Stedtfeld's resignation on Saturday.

In her resignation letter, Stedtfeld said she has accepted a position with Yolo County.

The county's elected Board of Supervisors will consider options for filling Stedtfeld's position on an interim basis in closed session Dec. 10. Alt said recruiting someone to permanently replace Stedtfeld will begin immediately. Alt said he hopes to have Stedtfeld's position filled by February.

"Mrs. Stedtfeld has been an asset to the citizens of Calaveras County," Jack Garamendi, chair for the Board of Supervisors, said in a prepared statement distributed by Alt and his staff. "Her resignation leaves a void in our organization. Megan has been successful in her service to Calaveras County as I am sure she will be in her future endeavors. We wish her and her family well."

Contact Guy McCarthy at gmccarthy@uniondemocrat.com or 588-4585. Follow him on Twitter at @GuyMcCarthy.

Board votes down Cannabis Control budget

[By Noah Berner](#) / Calaveras Enterprise / Nov 20, 2019

The Calaveras County Board of Supervisors failed to adopt the Division of Cannabis Control-Cannabis Regulation operating budget and the Cannabis Regulatory Fees special revenue fund budget for 2019-2020 at a board meeting on Tuesday.

In order to pass, the item needed the support of four of five supervisors. District 2 Supervisor Jack Garamendi, District 3 Supervisor Merita Callaway and District 5 Supervisor Benjamin Stopper voted in support, while District 1 Supervisor Gary Tofanelli and District 4 Supervisor Dennis Mills voted in opposition.

During the meeting, County Administrative Officer Albert Alt gave a short presentation on the budget and provided background.

The document was drafted in order to fund the implementation of County Code Chapter 17.95, Commercial Cannabis Cultivation and Chapter 9.22, Cannabis Background Clearance Badge, ordinances passed 3-2 by the board on Oct. 22 in order to regulate commercial cannabis cultivation and provide background checks for workers in the industry. The implementation of the ordinances was intended to be financed through fees charged to those participating in the program.

The Division of Cannabis Control was created in order to oversee and streamline the regulation of commercial cannabis cultivation, and operates under the supervision of the County Administrative Office.

The new office resulted from lessons learned during the Urgency Ordinance (UO), Alt said. At that time, there was no oversight or coordination between county offices, large backlogs due to unexpected volume, problems with fiscal monitoring, and a lack of program performance metrics.

While Cannabis Control will be involved in developing the regulatory program, oversight of the application process, coordination between county offices, compliance and enforcement, many other agencies will be involved in the regulatory process.

Regardless of the passage of the budget, the regulatory ordinances become effective on Friday, while the fees associated with them become effective Dec. 23.

The total revenue for the first year from fees associated with the ordinances is estimated at \$2.3 million.

Alt warned that failure to pass the budget would result in cannabis regulation falling on the shoulders of existing staff. While the county would still be able to collect the fees, it would be unable to spend them without an approved budget, so new staff would not be able to be hired and the cost of regulation would have to come from existing budgets.

Failure to adopt the budget would cause the performance of regulatory and administrative functions and the purchase of necessary equipment to be delayed or funded from elsewhere.

Necessary equipment purchases include a card machine to make clearance badges, secure file cabinets for storing confidential files, aerial imagery, training, small tools and radios.

“Staff time and effort will be divided among existing and new programs,” Alt said. “What we’ll experience will be similar to what we experienced under the UO, in that there will be backlogs, not only in the regulatory program, but the other work of the county as well.”

“The program is very complex; it requires a lot of hands on the wheel; it requires involvement of a lot of the land-use departments; and to do that right, we need the appropriate staffing and time on-task to be able to enforce this program,” he said.

Mills, along with Tofanelli, voted against the regulatory ordinances passed last month. He was the first to voice opposition to the budget.

“I think this thing is just running down a road to nowhere. All it’s going to take is somebody to jump up with a lawsuit like what’s happened before, and it all gets kind of pushed into the corner of the court,” Mills said. “I don’t see a benefit at all here, and I certainly take deep exception to the thought that if we don’t pass this, we’re going to do it anyway.”

Garamendi defended the budget.

“Perfect doesn’t exist. What we have is a program that will work, and if we don’t do this we are hurting our county ... We have the money set aside,” Garamendi said. “It’s no one else’s money except those who have paid the fee to be part of this, and we should use it accordingly. If we do not use that money, we are going to use other people’s money. Let’s not be hypocrites. Let’s build something for this county.”

Stopper argued that regulation would help alleviate environmental problems resulting from illegal grows.

“Funding this program will also help facilitate mitigating many of the environmental concerns,” he said. “The reason for regulation is to mitigate those concerns. Illegal farms abide by no rules. The people that come in, and they pay their \$12,000 and then however much it costs for their building permit, and then their grading permit – to the point where they’re in \$30,000 to \$40,000 deep before they even get to put a plant in the ground – those people are paying that money to abide by these set of rules, and at that point, I would certainly hope that’s insurance enough that they don’t want to lose that permit.”

Callaway said that since the ordinances were already approved, the supervisors had an obligation to take the necessary steps to implement them.

“This ordinance – yes, it was approved on a 3-2 vote – but it belongs to all of us. It now is time for us to implement it with the funding that will be available to implement it, because it will be implemented,” she said.

While Callaway moved for a vote, Tofanelli said that he would like to speak first.

“I find it very ironic that I am again in a place that my vote on a cannabis issue may be a deciding factor,” Tofanelli said. “And although it might not be the determining factor as to the ordinance being enacted, it will determine how it will be funded, which is a huge issue. ... There’s a lot more at stake here than the ordinance, as it will be enacted regardless of today’s outcome.”

Tofanelli cited several perceived problems with the regulatory ordinances, which included allowing more applicants to apply for permits than the county could handle, not involving the district attorney and sheriff in the background check process, inefficiencies in the application process, the fluid nature of a funding source based on fees, and a concern that the county would have to dip into the General Fund to implement the ordinances.

“I’m not sure ... the fees coming in are going to maintain this program. I don’t think after the first year when you get going on it you’re going to have enough fees coming in to handle all of the employees that you’ve brought on,” he said. “It makes it very difficult for me to say that I will fund this program, and I understand the weight, again, that’s going to be placed if I don’t vote ‘yes’ for this program on all of the departments and the department heads. It will be tremendous ... I’m not in favor of this budget as the way it’s been presented.”

The board voted 3-2, falling one vote short of the required number to adopt the budget.

While the regulatory ordinances for cannabis cultivation will soon take effect, for now they will have to be implemented using existing county staff and budgets without new employees and fees associated with the regulatory program.

At the end of the meeting, Tofanelli polled the board on bringing the item back at a future date, and it was agreed to revisit the issue at the next board meeting on Dec. 10.

Stopper was the supervisor who first polled the board about creating a department to oversee commercial cannabis regulation earlier this year. He spoke with the Enterprise over the phone following the meeting.

“We did pass an ordinance, and once that ordinance is passed, the train has basically left the station, and we are liable to uphold and implement that ordinance. So, initially I had grave disappointment in the fact that two of the supervisors were not willing to facilitate that for the county, but I think that Supervisor Tofanelli realizes the gravity of the situation, and I think that that’s why he polled the board at the end of the day,” he said.

In other business:

The board approved the Probation Department’s Pretrial Program Policy, authorized the acceptance of \$161,639 in 2019 Public Safety Power Shutoff resiliency funds from the California Office of Emergency Services, and undertook a closed session public employee performance evaluation for Alt, in which no reportable action was taken.

Will the 1974 Valley Springs Community Plan, revoked Nov. 12 by county supervisors, ever be replaced?

Calaveras Enterprise / Nov 20, 2019

Editor

Will the 1974 Valley Springs Community Plan, revoked Nov. 12 by county supervisors, ever be replaced? Why should you care? Everyone in the greater Valley Springs area has an investment in a focused community plan for Valley Springs. It is the hub for shopping, services, schools, community events, jobs and more. Pressures from growth and development will bring change. Without a clear, local, community-guided vision for Valley Springs, future changes may not include what is needed or be what you want.

After years of hard, successful work by local residents to update the old community plan with new drafts, the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors ignored the work and eliminated the Valley Springs Community Plan entirely from the new County-wide General Plan. We are not important enough? Valley Springs deserves better, don't you think? If you are wondering how this happened, visit the MyValleySprings.com website. A history of community planning in Valley Springs can be found under Planning/Community Planning, or go to myvalleysprings.com/communityplanning.html.

The Planning Department has now posted Valley Springs Community Plan draft documents on a "Valley Springs Proposed Community Plan" webpage. Look under Calaveras County/Planning Department/Projects/Special Planning Projects, or go to planning.calaverasgov.us/Projects/Special-Planning-Projects. There is also a Valley Springs Community Area map and a link to provide comments.

If you consider yourself part of the Valley Springs community, and care about rural quality of life, traffic, environmental protection, housing needs, parks and trails, growth and development, please review the draft community plan documents and give feedback. What makes the Valley Springs community unique? Why is it special to you? What goals and policies specific to Valley Springs should be in a community plan? What problems need to be addressed? Does the Community Vision reflect your vision for the future of Valley Springs?

If you care about Valley Springs and want a focused community plan to guide its future, please give feedback on the draft community plans to the Calaveras County Planning Department at VSCPcomments@co.calaveras.ca.us or call 754-6394 for more information.

Colleen Platt,

Board member,

Budget Surplus Projected For California

By [B.J. Hansen](#) / MML / Nov 21, 2019

Sacramento, CA — The state's non-partisan Legislative Analyst's Office has released a new report projecting California will have a \$7-billion budget surplus to start next fiscal year.

With the increased revenue the state's reserve fund is anticipated to grow by about \$2-billion, up to \$18.3 billion. The report notes that the state should have enough money to make it through a typical recession, but also urges constraint in spending the new incoming revenue. The Legislative Analyst's Office says there are signals that the economy could weaken, so it recommends only spending up to \$1-billion for ongoing new programs. The report also indicates that the size of the surplus could be lower if the Trump Administration does not allow the state to tax groups that manage Medicaid plans. The tax is expected to generate \$2-billion but is still awaiting federal approval.
