

**WEEKLY ReCAP****JANUARY 22, 2021****A Sampling of News and Views****P.O. Box 935, San Andreas, CA, 95249 • (209) 772-1463*****Protecting our rural environment by promoting citizen participation in sustainable land use planning since 2006***

**The Community Action Project (CAP) administers the Calaveras Planning Coalition (CPC), which is comprised of regional and local organizations, community groups, and concerned individuals who promote public participation in land use and resource planning to ensure a healthy human, natural, and economic environment now and in the future. Learn more at [www.calaverascap.com](http://www.calaverascap.com).**

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**NEXT CALAVERAS PLANNING COALITION MEETING:**  
**February 1, 2021, 3:00 P.M. TO 5:00 P.M. VIA ZOOM**

**NEW MEMBERS WELCOME AT CPC MEETINGS**

Organizations, groups, and individuals may join the CPC. Prospective members may attend two consecutive meetings before making a final decision on membership in the Coalition. The membership form is a pledge to support and advocate for the Coalition's eleven Land Use and Development Principles, which you will find on our website: [www.calaverascap.com](http://www.calaverascap.com). There is no membership fee. However, members are encouraged to donate to the CAP/CPC. Visitors and prospective members will, by necessity, be excluded from attorney/client privileged discussions.

If you are interested in CPC membership, please email CPC Facilitator Tom Infusino, [tomi@volcano.net](mailto:tomi@volcano.net), to receive a membership form, agenda, and the Zoom meeting connection.

***To help prevent the spread of Covid-19 in our county, all CAP/CPC meetings will be held online via Zoom until restrictions are lifted by the Public Health Department.***

**Upcoming Board of Supervisors Meetings**

**BOS – January 26, 2021**

**Agenda items of interest below**

15. After a presentation, provide direction to staff regarding redistricting process.
17. Conduct a public hearing and adopt a Resolution denying the appeal filed by Jerry Jones and upholding the Planning Commission's action to deny Zoning Amendment 2020-007.
18. Presentation of the General Plan Implementation Annual Work Program and request for direction on priorities.

**[Click Here to download the BOS Agenda](#)**

**[Click Here to Visit the BOS Website](#)**

**Planning Commission – January 28, 2021-  
more detail on county website**

## **AGENDA**

### **2020-071 TPM For Lowell G. and Sylvia Schlafmann**

### **2020-072 ZA For John-Paul Allen**

## **California's Changing Climate Breathes New Life Into Fire Season**

*Mark Chediak and Brian K. Sullivan*  
*Tue, January 19, 2021, 11:24 AM*

(Bloomberg) -- California's changing climate has pushed fire season to new lengths, triggering once-rare winter blackouts.

State utilities intentionally cut power to more than 40,000 homes and businesses Tuesday to prevent live wires from sparking wildfires as seasonal Santa Ana winds stoke the threat of blazes. As many as 235,000 customers have been affected by unplanned outages across the state, according to Poweroutage.us. Meanwhile, new wildfires have erupted in Santa Cruz county.

While the Santa Ana winds usually die off by November, they're increasingly extending further into winter, underscoring how wild California's weather has become as climate change drives extreme heat and drought. Last year, record temperatures took down large swaths of the state's power grid and wildfires torched more acreage than ever before.

"We have noticed the fire seasons are getting longer, the weather patterns are being a little bit different," said Richard Cordova, a spokesman for the California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection, more commonly known as Cal Fire. "We are seeing these conditions hitting us in December and now in January."

Edison International's Southern California Edison has shut off about 37,000 customers as gusts of up to 55 miles (88 kilometers) per hour batter the region and the temperature reaches 69 degrees Fahrenheit (21 Celsius). PG&E Corp. has switched off about 5,000 customers in the southern part of the state's Central Valley and Sierra Nevada foothills. Utilities have never warned of a possible shutoff of this size in January.

Read more: California's Climate Tinderbox: A Scientist on the Fire Crisis

During a regular winter, public safety power shutoffs "would not be under consideration, but this winter has been anything but normal," PG&E meteorologists said on the utility's website. Only 22% of the average rainfall this winter has been in the southern Sierra, they said.

California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment Report, published in 2018, forecasted that climate change would lead to longer dry seasons in the state. The report also says that wildfires will burn more acres this century.

High winds, along with low humidity that has dried brush and grasses, making them easier to burn, will create critical conditions Tuesday, the U.S. Storm Prediction Center said in a forecast.

"Recent fuel sampling indicates that the vegetation is still unseasonably dry and ripe for larger wildfires during windy periods," Edison's spokesman Reggie Kumar said by phone. "The last two months of 2020 were part of the worst fire season that California has seen, with near-record levels of dryness in November and December."

A storm system will near Southern California later this week and could bring cooler temperatures, though the region probably won't get any rain, said Bryan Jackson, a forecaster with the U.S. Weather Prediction Center. On Sunday, California saw temperatures rise to the 70s Fahrenheit in the central part of the state, setting records for the day in San Francisco, and into the 80s to the south, the National Weather Service said.

While the winter months usually mark California's rainy season, much of the state remains gripped by drought conditions, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor.

## **Planning Director Maurer to retire after seven years with the county**

By Noah Berner / The Calaveras Enterprise

January 21, 2021

Calaveras County Planning Director Peter Maurer is retiring at the end of March after seven years on the job.

"It's been a great experience," he said. "I've been in the planning business, planning for the rural counties, for my entire career of about 36 years, and I'm ready for retirement. My professional goal when I got here seven years ago was to get the general plan adopted and get the planning department functioning in an efficient manner, and I feel like I've done both."

Maurer grew up in the San Jose area and received his planning degree from California State University, Chico.

"Growing up in the San Jose area, and watching that develop into the sort of sprawling, suburban area that it is, got me thinking about planning, and I decided to make that my career," he said. "I worked as an intern, and then as part-time extra help, for the city of Chico, and then after kicking around and doing a lot of other non-related jobs, my first real job in planning was over in Douglas County, Nevada."

After about two years, Maurer returned to California and got a job with El Dorado County.

"I'm a fourth-generation Californian, so California really is my home," he said. "I settled in Placerville, and was there for 28 years. I worked my way up from an associate planner, to senior planner, to principal planner in a fairly short period of time, about three years, and twice I served as the acting director for the El Dorado County Planning Department."

While Maurer had thought that he would likely retire in El Dorado County, an opening for the planning director position for Calaveras County drew him to the area.

"The opportunity came open here, and I thought it would be good for me personally as well as professionally, so I applied for the job and got it," he said. "My brother (Keith Maurer) taught at Bret Harte for 30 years, and I had spent some time down here and was familiar with the county. ... I had met someone here that I wanted to be with, so that was an extra bonus, that I was able to move and work here rather than carry on a long-distance relationship."

Although Maurer's new role had some similarities, it also had its differences.

"It's one thing to be an active director," he said. "But you don't have the full responsibility of the budgeting and the political issues and working with the board, so that was certainly a major change from my previous responsibilities."

Maurer said that the pressure of development in Calaveras County is much less than in El Dorado, partly due to the lack of a highway over the Sierra Nevada that's open year-round.

"Highway 4's open in the summertime, but it's not like Interstate 80 or Highway 50 where you have a lot of through traffic, and we're not as close to the major urban area of Sacramento," he said. "The pressure of development was much less, but the issues are the same. ... We've still got to deal with the same state requirements, the same political issues that come up in all of the counties of California."

Maurer said that his biggest accomplishment on the job was the adoption of the General Plan update in 2019, which had been in the works for over a decade.

"A whole rewrite of a general plan is just a huge, almost impossible task," he said.

"There's a lot of conflicting desires and different interest groups. You have folks that want to develop land, and you have folks that don't want to see land developed. You have people that are interested in a variety of different aspects of the community, and they have different thoughts and ideas. I think the planning profession is really trying to find that compromise area that satisfies the majority of the needs of the community."

The general plan should be reviewed and revised regularly, Maurer said.

"I would advocate that a general plan is like a business plan, and you should look at it regularly ... and make minor tweaks along the way rather than throwing it out and starting over again," he said. "The documentation and the state law surrounding general plan requirements is so complex that I hope the county never has to go through it again in that manner."

Maurer said that cannabis regulation posed another big challenge during his time with the county.

"We went through quite a bit of energy and effort over the years, starting with the urgency ordinance, and then the ban, and then the current regulatory program," he said. "All of the issues surrounding cannabis was certainly something that I knew was there, but I didn't realize that it was going to be quite so time consuming. But that's been an interesting challenge, since we were on the cutting edge of some of the regulation when the state first decided that they would allow regulation."

Maurer praised his staff for their work under his leadership.

"I've had great staff over the years," he said. "They're all very competent professionals, really wanting to do good work for the county."

The primary challenge of planners is working to foster economic stability, ensure environmental stability and nurture the human capabilities of the community, Maurer said.

"You want a community that supports its residents economically, socially and environmentally, so we have good water, clean air, a healthy environment, healthy economy, adequate jobs and good education," he said. "That's the primary responsibility and challenge of both the board as well as the staff, whether it's planning or public works or environmental health, or any of the departments of county government. We really should be looking at all three of those aspects of community growth."

Maurer said the most rewarding part of the job was seeing a successful project carried out.

"When you see a well-planned development, whether it's commercial or residential, get built, consistent with what you had recommended, and it's successful, that's a good feeling," he said.

One of the biggest challenges facing the county from a planning perspective is re envisioning what communities look like in the face of changing circumstances, Maurer said.

"I think that counties, and Calaveras County is not different than most, relied on residential development for many, many years as its economic driver, and what we're finding is that that model really isn't working that well, and we've seen communities close down over the years," he said. "We really need to re-envision what our communities are going to look like. People want to be able to live where they are, enjoy their community, have adequate schools and parks and not have to get into a car and drive a long way. I think just the changing demographics, the changing demands from the state, are all affecting how we look at planning in Calaveras County."

An important role of planners is explaining regulations and helping the public through the process, Maurer said.

"I think that a perception of the department before I got here was that county bureaucrats, regardless of what department they're in, are there to try to stop projects from happening," he said. "That couldn't be further from the truth. There are rules and

regulations that have been adopted for a purpose, and when development occurs, our job is to ensure that those standards are applied, and sometimes they can be onerous."

Maurer said that he encourages his staff to think critically about regulations.

"If it's not working, let's change the rule, and we've done that in some cases," he said.

"If the system isn't working right, let's fix the system so that it works better, and everyone gets more of what they want out of the process. The community gets a more successful, a better looking, more economically viable community, and the applicant gets to build what he or she wants to do, and move forward with their business and their dreams."

During his time as planning director, Maurer became involved with the California County Planning Directors Association (CCPDA), a group of planning directors from every county in California.

"I got involved in reviewing legislation that affected counties, particularly housing legislation," he said. "For the last several years I have been working with a committee of other planning directors, California State Association of Counties (CSAC) staff and their lobbyists at the state level to help let the legislators understand the effects of the proposed legislation and how it might impact the counties."

Maurer said that his work with CCPDA has been a "very rewarding experience."

"We weren't always successful, and sometimes things were adopted that, to us, didn't make sense," he said. "But many times we were able to modify the laws so that when they were finally adopted they were workable for us."

CSAC recently presented Maurer with a Circle of Service Award for his efforts.

"That was a nice recognition of the work," he said. "There should be pride in public service, and I'm proud of having made that my career and trying to serve the community."

Maurer, who recently turned 65 years old, said that he is looking forward to retirement. He said he plans on doing some traveling and spending more time enjoying his favorite pastimes.

"I like to do a lot of outdoor activities, hiking and cycling," he said. "I live in Murphys, and that's my home. I have good friends, and hopefully when this whole pandemic is over we'll be able to get back together and play some bocce ball, and do some other activities. I do have an interest in a winery on Main Street in Murphys, and so I'll probably get more involved in that upon retirement."

Maurer is part of a group of friends that purchased an interest in Hovey Winery in order to help keep the business going while Chuck Hovey was recovering from a stroke.

"Unfortunately, he passed away about a year and a half ago now, so we are ending up running a winery," he said. "It's certainly been an interesting experience to be on the other side of the counter, with all of the permitting requirements, both at the state, federal and local level for the activities of running a business."

Maurer said that he plans to stay in Murphys upon retirement.

"I am a member of this community, and I want it to be a vibrant, successful community," he said. "I intend to stay here when I retire, and I've become active in the community

and involved in other things. I think it's important for people in positions of responsibility like mine to be involved in the community."

Maurer's last days on the job will be spent focusing on a zoning map update, a comprehensive zoning ordinance update, housing issues and a hemp ordinance. He said he had some words of advice for the next person to hold his position.

"Be open to change," he said. "Get to know the community well if you don't already. Learn how each community is unique and different, and although we all sort of face the same issues, there's a different approach for each community. What might work in Murphys won't work in Mokelumne Hill or San Andreas. Get to know the people. Get to know their concerns. Develop a rapport with the individual board members where they feel comfortable talking to you and you feel comfortable talking to them. Again, it's a collaborative effort to try to make the county better for everyone."

District 2 Supervisor Jack Garamendi praised Maurer for his work for the county. "Peter served as a remarkable planning director and county leader," he said. "His deep knowledge of planning and his good nature helped lead our county through some very hard times. Peter is a team player, and worked hard with the board of supervisors as priorities and personalities shifted, impacting his work."

Garamendi said that Maurer's greatest contribution to the community was the General Plan update.

"Peter was able to pull together so many varied elements to make this document a success," he said. "His understanding of our communities, our culture, our aspirations and an intuitive sense of what makes Calaveras special guided him in the creation of a planning document that will direct our county land use for decades. Finally, Peter is just a really great guy, he cares about his staff, his co-workers and his community and this came across in every interaction. Peter will be missed and I appreciate all he has done for Calaveras County."

District 5 Supervisor and Board Chair Ben Stopper said that Maurer wouldn't be easy to replace.

"When it comes to either regulating cannabis, or working on a general plan, it's a very contentious issue, and for him to have navigated through that in the last (seven) years speaks volumes to not only Peter's experience, but his ability to listen to all sides and be able to find compromise," he said. "We all have valued the work that Mr. Maurer has gotten done, and we'll be hard put to find someone as qualified as he is to fill the position in the future."

## **COVID-19 vaccine: County awaiting next shipment as inventory dwindles**



By Dakota Morlan/The Calaveras Enterprise

Jan 21, 2021

Calaveras County Sheriff Rick DiBasilio receives a COVID-19 vaccine on Thursday, administered by Deputy Sydne Elam, a tactical EMT.

In its first week of operation, Dignity Health Mark Twain Medical Center's COVID-19 vaccination clinic will have provided 860 doses to some Calaveras County residents in 1B Tier One of California's vaccine rollout schedule.

According to CEO/President Doug Archer, the hospital is currently handling vaccinations for residents age 65 and older, while the county will be administering doses to workers at high risk of exposure in the education, childcare, emergency services, food and agriculture sectors when inventory allows.

Currently, there are no additional clinic dates scheduled beyond Friday. Until another shipment arrives, the hospital will not be able to address the thousands of individuals who have already called in requesting a vaccine.

"The entire nation is grappling with this same supply chain issue, and I am hopeful that by early next week we will be able to resume our vaccination clinics and continue the important work of vaccinating our community," Archer told the Enterprise on Thursday.

A projected date for a next shipment is currently unknown, as shipments can often arrive with little advance notice. Gov. Gavin Newsom has recently come under fire for a lack of clarity during the vaccine rollout, leaving eligible Californians unsure of when they can get vaccinated.

Meanwhile, the county's Public Health Division of the Health and Human Services Agency (HHS), in partnership with Mark Twain Medical Center, has begun administering second doses of the vaccine to health care workers and first responders in Phase 1A.

On Thursday, the Calaveras County Sheriff's Office announced that Sheriff Rick DiBasilio and other members of the department had begun receiving vaccinations. Deputy Sydne Elam, a tactical EMT, will be assisting Public Health in administering vaccines. Newsom has broadened the pool of professionals who can administer the vaccine in an effort to expedite the rollout.

The Calaveras County Public Health COVID-19 dashboard shows case number information on Thursday.

Although Interim HHS Director Sam Leach could not provide an updated count of the county's vaccine inventory by press time, he stated on Jan. 13 that the county was in possession of several hundred doses and that 100 more were expected to arrive within the next week.

"Between (the county) and Mark Twain, we have enough second doses for those groups," Leach said. "We are doing well there."

However, some long-term care residents in Calaveras County who want to be vaccinated have yet to receive their first dose, even though they are included in Phase 1A. Leach stated during a board of supervisors meeting on Tuesday that Public Health is "awaiting clarity" regarding the issue, as vaccines are being distributed to care homes via a federal contract with CVS and Walgreens.

Another factor that has slowed the vaccine rollout was a statewide pause in administering a batch of the Moderna vaccine that was linked to an unusual number of possible allergic reactions.

Leach said on Tuesday that the county and local hospital were in possession of doses from that batch, though none had been administered, and that the temporary hold on the batch had impacted available inventory.

On Wednesday, California State Epidemiologist Dr. Erica Pan issued a statement advising providers that the batch was safe for use, recommending that they could immediately resume administration.

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### From the Calaveras County website COVID-19 Dashboard

**1389 Total cases**

**1292 Recovered**

**74 Active**

**4 Hospitalizations**

**23 Deaths**

**Zipcodes 95226 & 95252 continue to have the highest count of cases**

Gift

by Tara K. Shepersky

Weeds are easy to love, so  
generous. Take the common  
roadside thistle. I could learn delight  
from those plumb-weight petals  
the color of a full moon's rise in June.  
I could learn from the thousand  
August-bursting wishes  
embracing each other, then traveling  
into the wide unlistened-to  
how scarcity might be something  
I mostly imagine.  
I could learn to imagine instead

resurrection.  
Spines crumpled,  
fine straight carriage  
kneeling to death come timely,  
easing the will downward into soil.  
Shaping a stretched silence  
nobody wanted.

Winter carries, when I cannot, trust  
in some kind of spring.

From:

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2020

Gift — The Hopper | Environmental Lit. Poetry. Art. ([hoppermag.org](http://hoppermag.org)).



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