

Community Briefs – Jan. 24-26, 2017

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New Melones boat ramp open again

The Bureau of Reclamation has opened the Tuttle town boat ramp at New Melones Lake for the first time since June 2014.

The bureau reported Friday that recent heavy rains have increased lake levels enough to allow boats to launch from a lower-level ramp. Four-wheel drive vehicles are still recommended when launching due to the present condition of the native surface road going down to the ramp. All boat launching fees will apply.

For questions or more information about the boat ramp or boating at New Melones Lake, call 536-90904.

Blue Lake Springs' Padelford gains national recognition

On March 22, Blue Lake Springs Homeowners Association member Pete Padelford will receive a prestigious National Wildfire Mitigation Award at the Wildland Urban-Interface Conference, in Reno. The WMA is the highest national honor one can receive for outstanding work and significant program impact in wildfire preparedness and mitigation.

The winners were announced Jan. 17 by the WMA's four sponsors: the National Association of State Foresters; the International Association of Fire Chiefs; the National Fire Protection Association; and the USDA Forest Service.

A WMA recognizes "... sustained wildfire mitigation actions that lead to community fire adaption and recognizes organizations and individuals who have implemented successful and sustainable wildfire mitigation projects on the ground in their communities."

The Butte Fire in 2015 was a wake-up call to all rural homeowners of the potential hazard of wildland fire and the speed with which fire can race across the landscape if fuel loads are not reduced. Padelford has been giving the latter much of his attention in the past few years, with many accomplishments.

Padelford was instrumental in expanding fire prevention efforts in his community, including California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's Volunteers in Prevention, promoting others to volunteer and provide technical support to improve fire prevention, helping to build a database for monitoring property owner information, tracking dead trees due to the western pine beetle attacks on Ponderosa Pines in

Calaveras County and building a shaded fuel break around and within the Blue Lake Springs Subdivision, funded through Pacific Gas and Electric Co. and California State Responsibility Area grant funds.

Padelford's dedication to his community is evident in his daily efforts, from fostering fire-safe practices to leadership, training and hands-on efforts to reduce fuel loads that would otherwise contribute to wildland fires. His wife, Joann, is one of his biggest supporters.

Bigelow wins inaugural 'Rural Leadership Award'

The Rural County Representatives of California recently announced the winners of its first-ever Rural Leadership Awards. The first winner of the RCRC's new form of recognition for officials who have demonstrated an understanding of, and leadership in, rural issues and the unique challenges that rural communities face is California Assemblyman Frank Bigelow (R-O'Neals).

"I am honored and grateful to receive the RCRC Rural Leadership Award," said Bigelow. "Having worked on my family's ranch for decades, I know firsthand of the many challenges faced in rural California. I've tried to bring my passion for rural California to the Capitol over the past four years, and I look forward to continuing to advocate for rural communities."

RCRC Past Chair and Mariposa County Supervisor Kevin Cann explained RCRC's choice, saying "California's rural counties face unique challenges and obstacles when dealing with state and federal policies, and it can often be difficult to effectively communicate these challenges in Sacramento. We truly appreciate Assembly Member Bigelow's leadership in the Legislature over the past four years on a wide range of issues, including efforts to secure funding for local fairs, addressing tree mortality problems in the Central Sierra, securing funds for Calaveras County in light of the devastating Butte Fire, and raising the level of awareness on many other issues of importance to California's rural counties."

A second recipient of the Rural Leadership Award was also named: former Deputy Cabinet Secretary Wade Crowfoot, now serving as CEO of the Water Foundation, who said, "It has been a true honor to make sure that rural voices are heard within our state Capitol."

Lions Club hopes to revive in San Andreas/Valley Springs

Representatives with Lions Clubs International hope to start a new club in the San Andreas and Valley Springs area. Anyone interested in joining the service club may attend an informational meeting at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 2, at the Calaveras Senior Center, 956 Mountain Ranch Road, San Andreas.

"We were concerned there were needs that weren't being met," said District Gov. Marilyn Richardson, of Copperopolis, who also said that an aging group of members of clubs that once thrived in San Andreas was both part of the reason those clubs shut down and why the organization is seeking new blood to infuse the area with new energy.

The worldwide organization celebrates its centennial this year. The Lions Club was founded by Chicago businessman Melvin Jones in 1917 and was internationally chartered in Canada in 1920. At the organization's 1925 international convention, in Ohio, Helen Keller challenged the club to become "knights of the blind in the crusade against darkness." Since then, club members around the world have assisted those who need them with obtaining eyeglasses. In 1930, Lion George Bonham, after seeing a blind man experience difficulty crossing a street, painted a cane white with a wide red band to assist visually impaired people.

For more information, call Richardson at 840-7442 or 785-2757, or email her at mardaned@caltel.com.

Commission on Aging planning session

The Commission on Aging will host a planning session on Friday, Feb. 3, at 9:30 a.m., at The Link, 130 E. St. Charles St., San Andreas. Commissioners will look at the viability of existing projects and be asked to identify and submit new projects. The COA is tasked with helping the county provide an environment conducive to the well-being of older adults.

Some of the current projects include recognition of the Volunteer Senior of the Year, publication of the Senior Scope, which provides contact information for services for seniors in Calaveras County, and the Vial of Life, a refrigerator magnet that holds senior information for emergencies. The Vial of Life is co-sponsored by the American Legion Ambulance Service.

There are seats available on the Commission on Aging. Residents of Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4 are encouraged to apply. Applications are available at calaverasgov.us. Questions may be directed to Chairman Rex Whisnand at 785-8166.

Special Human Trafficking presentation at noon, Feb. 6

At noon on Monday, Feb. 6, in Classroom 3 at the Mark Twain Medical Center, human trafficking survivor Holly Gibbs will host a special presentation on recognizing victims who are presently caught in the sex-trafficking web. Mark Twain Medical Center employees and all interested members of the community are invited to attend, in order to learn to recognize and respond to human-trafficking victims.

Gibbs was a victim of human trafficking at the age of 14, but managed to escape through her own efforts. She works with Dignity Health to train health care professionals

and members of the community at the system's 39 hospitals in California, Nevada and Arizona to look for the red flags of a sex-trafficked victim. Recognizable signs include: a gang member's name tattooed on a girl's face; bruises; hunger; or expressions of fear.

To register, call Deborah Cline at 754-2470 or email her at deborah.cline@dignityhealth.org.

http://www.calaverasenterprise.com/news/article_933c842a-e1c6-11e6-9fd9-5f5fa4c30fbc.html