



WILDWOOD DAYS STARTS THIS MONTH!

Mark your
calendars
now
to join
in the fun!

Wildwood Days - the four-day, annual community celebration - rolls into town starting Thursday, July 30 this year. See the insert in this newsletter for the schedule, as well as how you can be in the parade (page 2 story, featuring the grand marshals) and the grand opening of the re-designed community garden, with activities for all (page 4).



Cory and Kiley Johnson

While the parade is put on by the chamber of commerce, the bulk of Wildwood Days is managed by the fire department. Taking the lead on this event and other departmental fundraisers are firefighters Kiley and Cory Johnson, following the retirement of Chief Shane Wilson who with his wife, Lisa, has overseen the event for the past many years.



Happy Birthday, America!

Have a safe & happy July 4 weekend!

Chamber names grand marshals for parade

Wally and Sandra Close have been named the grand marshals of the annual Wildwood Days parade which takes place Saturday, Aug. 1 at noon.

The Closes have been prominent figures not just in Rio Dell, where they operated CC Market for decades, and Scotia, where she taught first grade for 40 years, but throughout Humboldt County for their popular CC Catering business. It often wins "Best of" awards in competitions hosted by the North Coast Journal and Times Standard newspapers.

Sandra Close is a Rio Dell native, noting that she was born in Scotia Hospital. In an interview when they sold their grocery store on Eeloa Avenue, she spoke of how her own parents ran a different grocery (there were five in business at the same time in Rio Dell) so she grew up in the trade. In high school she went across town to work in the store Wally, who moved to Rio Dell at age 12, had been operating with his family since the 1950s, originally called Bellevue Market. The couple worked hard but also found time for travel, including in a plane he owned in the 1970s. They rebuilt after their store burned down, and started the catering business in the 1990s.

"We don't have an online presence, it's all repeat business and word of mouth," Sandra Close says of the catering the couple does today. She notes they are cutting back to spend more time relaxing, for example enjoying bocce games with friends in their yard ("We have a regulation court," she says) and time with her two pug dogs and two new kittens, Peaches and Cream.

The parade is free and open to all who want to enter. Sponsored by the chamber, it offers prizes in categories including Best Vehicle, Best Use of Theme, and Best Overall. The theme is America250, celebrating the nation's birthday. To participate, come to Center Street in front of the schools and line up by 11 a.m. at the latest to be included in judging. Bring an application, which you can download at riodellscotiachamber.org, or pick one up at the sign-in table.



Fire runs for May 2026:

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Community lunches help ensure homeless are fed

A group of women has been putting on a free community lunch twice a month throughout this year at the Community Resource Center. Open to all, they especially want to make meals available to the homeless.

Elena Valverde wipes away tears at the mention of her son, Christian Alexis, who died in March 2025 at age 29 while living in Scotia. She approached Sarah Reback, coordinator of the Community Resource Center, about hosting the twice-monthly meals in his memory, and is joined in the tasks of cooking and serving by Edina Hernández, Analeidy Limón, Antonia López, Adali Herrera and Alejandra Gutierrez.

A recent meal featured chicken enchiladas, beans and rice, salad, coffee, and flan for dessert. Reback says about 20 typically come to eat during the 10 a.m. to noon time slot, including some who are homeless. The women agreed to cook for the chamber's Fiesta del Rio event last month, developing a list of the needed ingredients and showing up at the fire hall at 8 a.m. on a Sunday to prep the noon meal. A Facebook post about the community lunches says the women are exploring ways to extend their community lunch effort into Eureka.



Pictured left to right:
Elena Valverde,
Edina Hernández
and Analeidy Limón

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Community garden slates grand opening

The community garden on the grounds of the Rio Dell Baptist Church will hold its grand opening starting at 1:30 p.m. Saturday, August 1, as part of Wildwood Days. Garden volunteer Elizabeth Warren says there will be activities for children from 2 to 3:30 p.m., and visitors can tour the newly redesigned facilities which include in-ground and raised bed plantings, an orchard, and a greenhouse. Jackie Emerson, who has trained as a master gardener, will be on hand to answer questions.



Pictured left to right:

Kelsey Machado,
Jackie Emerson,
Marti Kelly,
& Elizabeth Warren



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Deadline for August newsletter is July 6th.
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