

# Rio Dell-Scotia News

## Rio Dell's business park highlighted in regional media

*The following article by freelance writer Emily Hobelmann first appeared in the Red Headed Black Belt online news media March 12 and is used here with permission.*



**The Humboldt Brand facility**

**Bonnie and  
Reuven Sherr**



While the majority of California's municipalities are not allowing commercial cannabis activity the City of Rio Dell is letting cannabis businesses go big in the industrial area along Highway 101 across the river from downtown.

Rio Dell even created a cannabis-themed logo for its Humboldt Rio Dell Business Park, as this stretch is now called. Although the zoning in this area is not exclusive to cannabis, City Manager Kyle Knopp says, "At the moment, the cannabis industry is the primary investor in the park."

There are some large projects going in, multi-faceted developments that include both volatile and non-volatile manufacturing, processing and packaging, greenhouse and indoor cultivation, nurseries, distribution facilities and a cannabis testing laboratory. Once realized, this business park will be a major industry hub in Humboldt County, and Knopp says there are even more projects currently in early stages of development.

Rio Dell is taking a *forge ahead and lead* approach to the cannabis industry, as opposed to the wait-and-see approach of neighboring Fortuna.

I was able to visit both the Humboldt Brand facility at the northern end of the business park and developer Glenn White's complex just south. The proprietors told me a bit about their business models and development plans, and about their experiences working with the City of Rio Dell.

The Humboldt Brand facility is located at the former Moore Fuel parcel, and will soon house volatile manufacturing, processing and a nursery. The distribution arm of the business is up and running now at this location.

Humboldt Brand Chief Executive Officer Reuven Sherr and Chief Operating Officer Bonnie Sherr say it's been "fantastic" to work with the City of Rio Dell on this project. They are impressed with city staff's professionalism, with the timeliness of their work and with their availability for answering questions.

"Everybody that we've had to deal with has been really supportive," Bonnie Sherr adds. The Sherrs considered other options for their Humboldt Brand headquarters, but this particular location came with a level of certainty not available at other sites. "We knew we would be able to get the permits here — Rio Dell approved this area for cannabis."

Humboldt Brand has been operating as a consulting business out of an office in Garberville, assisting their co-op of farmers with all facets of permitting, including agricultural consulting. They will continue to provide consulting services at the new facility, in addition to their licensed operations.

"What we saw is that no one is going to make it in this industry by themselves," says Bonnie Sherr. "Our goal is to work with everyone to try and be powerhouse of Northern California," Reuven Sherr adds. "We have to band together."

The industry has changed dramatically, Reuven Sherr continues. Between lab testing requirements, having to set up payroll for employees, licensing fees and the application process — the new legal era can be a lot for any one farmer to handle.

Humboldt Brand helps farmers determine exactly what they need to do to have efficient business operations and to make sure all of their proverbial ducks are in a row. Planning ahead is essential, Bonnie Sherr says, like never before.

With their new facility, they hope to ensure prosperity for their cooperative of farmers in the new legal market by not only providing clones, processing, manufacturing, packaging and distribution for clients, but also through continuing to offer support for brand and business development.

Humboldt Brand also has plans to give back to the community: 1 percent of profits are earmarked for Southern Humboldt youth sports programs. They will also do profit sharing for employees and for farmers involved in getting the business off the ground. **(Continued on Page 3)**

**Two new officers sworn in at Rio Dell** Officers Logan Mitchell and Crystal Landry were sworn in at the March 3 city council meeting in Rio Dell by City Clerk Karen Dunham. The pair are recent graduates of the police academy and have undergone several weeks of training with Chief Jeff Connor.



**Easter egg hunt slated** The Rio Dell Community Resource Center is sponsoring the annual egg hunt on Sat., April 20 from 1 to 3 p.m. at Fireman's Park on Wildwood in Rio Dell. The event is free and open to community members of all ages. There will be food, fun and many local organizations doing outreach and providing information about resources in the area.

**Rio Dell schools report news** The Parent-Teacher Organization will meet April 4 at 4 p.m. in room 402. On April 5 will be a 'Panther Picnic,' lunch with a parent or guardian. The school board meeting will be April 10 at 5:30 p.m. in Room 103. Open house will be April 11 at 5:30 p.m. Students will have early release at 1 p.m. on April 12, ASP closes at 4 p.m. and spring break will be April 15 to 19. April 26 – will be the monthly awards ceremony.

Rio Dell cheerleaders took 1st place in their division and 1st place overall (Grand Champions) at the Crescent City Jaycees Boys basketball tournament on March 1-2. Rio Dell varsity boys basketball took 5th place in their division.

**Dias Artstries moves to Avenue of the Giants** Rio Dell artist and businessman Adam Dias has relocated his redwood workspace and gallery to 26540 Highway 254, the Avenue of the Giants, in Redcrest. He says it's a space he's been looking at for a long time, and his focus will increasingly be on use of the laser technology featured here in past issues, which allows him to cost-effectively craft unique plaques and other products. His website, [redwoodlaser.com](http://redwoodlaser.com), showcases this product.

**Fitness group seeks new home** The Rio Dell Senior Exercise Group needs a new home. For five years this group, the only exercise class in Rio Dell, has kept about a dozen seniors in top-notch shape through a rigorous course of exercise and encouragement, according to member Rick Pelren of Metropolitan, who credits the leaders, Susan Nessen and Rena Dewell. "Our group is open to all seniors in the Rio Dell area, and we endeavor to help people regain flexibility, maintain muscle tone, and restore health. We have an excellent program in place that has proven to be highly beneficial," he says.

Pelren thanks the first Baptist Church of Rio Dell "for allowing us to use their church basement as our gymnasium for the past two years" and to the Fortuna Senior Center for its direct financial support and sponsorship over the years, but notes that the group now must seek a space about 20 by 20 feet where exercise classes can be held three days a week.

"If you or your group are considering adopting the Rio Dell Senior Exercise Group please contact: [marvelouslyradiant@outlook.com](mailto:marvelouslyradiant@outlook.com) for more information," he says.

**Homeless count finds 40 in Rio Dell, Scotia** A count in January of homeless people in Humboldt County found 40 locally living without housing out of 1,470 countywide, according to Sally Hewitt, co-chair of the Humboldt Housing and Homeless Coalition that organized the count, and program manager with the Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services. Sara Faught of the Rio Dell Community Resource Center whose group coordinated the Rio Dell/Scotia portion of the annual "Point In Time" count with the City of Rio Dell, said five volunteers locally were among the 140 county wide who went out on January 23 to contact people who were unsheltered, including those living in campsites and cars.

The biennial census is required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and results are used by the state of California to allocate funding to counties to address homelessness and housing. City manager Kyle Knopp said he understood the previous count found 38 people in the area were unsheltered, so the number is fairly consistent. Because numbers were combined for neighboring communities, there is no separate breakdown of the number of unsheltered in Rio Dell and Scotia. By comparison, there was a total of 83 for the combined count encompassing Fortuna, Loleta and Ferndale, 220 in Garberville, Redway and Benbow, and 653 in Eureka.

**Property sales continue brisk in Scotia** There were 10 properties in escrow at mid-March including the site of the former hardware store and the Scotia Inn, the former Catholic church, and several houses, according to Mary Bullwinkel of Town of Scotia marketing.

**Craft show slated** A craft show will be held at the Rio Dell Volunteer Fire Department at Center and Wildwood on Sat., April 27 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. A wide array of refreshments will be served by firefighters. Proceeds will benefit the department. For a booth, call Virginia Sifford at 707.616.9195. Come support this event, check out the wares, and stock up on treasures or the many gifting opportunities in the season ahead!

**Rio Dell council expands cannabis footprint** The Rio Dell City Council approved measures March 19 that will streamline cannabis taxation, allow up to three dispensaries as well as distribution and testing laboratories in the downtown area, permit cultivation on the Dinsmore Plateau, and create a cannabis local equity program to provide assistance to those negatively impacted by the legal status of cannabis prior to 2015.

**(Humboldt Rio Dell Business Park continued from Page 1.)**

Developer Glenn White's five-acre parcel just south of there will house three new buildings. The first is nearing completion and will have a testing laboratory, a manufacturing facility and a distribution business. Another will house cannabis complementary businesses including a health spa, a retail clothing shop and a coffee bistro.

White purchased this parcel in 2015, foreseeing the state's nearing legalization of recreational cannabis and the potential for industry in this location. Once California did legalize at the end of 2016, he started to advocate for the allowance of cannabis industry in the business park.



**Facade of first building of  
Glenn White's development**



**Developer Glenn White**



**Humboldt Live Resin  
tech operating volatile  
extraction unit**



**Volatile extraction unit  
on site.**

He says that in the very beginning, Rio Dell leadership really had to give it some thought – the decision to allow cannabis industry in this sector was not instantaneous. White says he made good faith efforts to educate the city council on the potential benefits of allowing regulated cannabis businesses in town. He also underscored the value of a legal regulated market to consumers.

"Eventually they turned the corner and said we want to zone this area for cannabis development," and White was ready to go. All along, his vision for this parcel was a complex of some sort, incorporating retail and industry services.

White asserts that the best cannabis comes from the Emerald Triangle, even now in the new regulated market. The biggest hurdle in the here-and-now, he says, is to educate consumers who buy cannabis without giving a thought to the source.

White is co-owner of the Humboldt Live Resin volatile manufacturing business and the Emerald County Statewide distribution company, both of which are operational now in temporary locations on-site. These businesses will move into the new building when it is ready, and on-site testing will be available.

Humboldt Live Resin offers "fresh frozen" extraction services, meaning they can freeze cannabis at the farm as soon as plants are taken down, then store the cannabis frozen until they extract. This process makes things easy for farmers, White says, because they don't have to dry, store, process and market their crops.

Norms are shifting for cannabis farmers; fresh frozen is one example of how — in some cases — the days of trimmers are no more. The high demand for concentrates in the legal market is driving this particular shift. Developers like White and business people like Reuven and Bonnie Sherr are paving the way for farmers to adapt.

Time will tell how Rio Dell will benefit from embracing cannabis industry. But one thing is for sure: The city needs money.

Cannabis tax revenues for Rio Dell are general purpose funds, appropriated at the sole discretion of the city council. Some could go toward Rio Dell's shoddy roads, as state grants and allotments just aren't cutting it. "Streets in Rio Dell need to be subsidized with local funds if the conditions are to improve," Knopp says. Or, cannabis tax revenues could go toward the expense of the city's police force, as more than 60 percent of its general funds go this way already.

Ultimately though, a key component of any cannabis revenue taken in will be to invest in methods to diversify Rio Dell's economy. "Rio Dell's condition today is largely a result of being dependent on one specific industry, timber," Knopp says. "We need to look at cannabis as a means to an end," he continues, a path toward a more diversified and stable economy and sustainable quality of life.

"We want to turn Rio Dell into a success story where the catalyst of the story is the cannabis industry," Knopp says. "A couple years from now, we want that *New York Times* article discussing how legalization has reshaped this small California town for the good... It's very doable here in Rio Dell. It's mutually beneficial, and it doesn't hurt that our business park has the best location in the heart of the Emerald Triangle."

The broader community is certainly watching with interest. Perhaps Rio Dell's warm welcome to the industry and possible success will sway neighboring municipalities or even other cities and counties in the state toward embracing cannabis commerce as well.

**(Continued on Page 4)**

**EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 21st**



## Rio Dell-Scotia News

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**Call the Rio Dell-Scotia Chamber of Commerce at**  
**506-5081 to advertise.**

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## Ongoing Events

### CalFresh/CalWorks:

Do you know if you are eligible for either CalFresh or CalWorks? Come to the Community Resource Center to find out how to qualify and apply for both programs. You can also apply for CalFresh, CalWorks and MediCal at [www.cyouyourself.com](http://www.cyouyourself.com).

**Senior Brown Bag Program:** Food boxes given the **2nd Thursday** of every month for local seniors. Boxes distributed from 11:30 a.m.- 1 p.m. at the Church of Christ, 325 2nd Ave. in Rio Dell. To sign up call Food for People at 445-3166.

**Rio Dell Library:** Tuesday-11-4, Wednesday 1-6, Saturday- 11-4

There is a First 5 Puppet Story Time every **Saturday** at 11 a.m. 715 Wildwood Ave., 764-3333.

**Emergency Food:** Running low on food this week? Get a bag for your family or just for yourself at:

- **The Community Resource Center:** 99 Wildwood Ave., Rio Dell, no income verification is needed.
- **The Journey Church:** 95 Bellevue Ave. Rio Dell, **Tuesday & Thursday** 9 a.m.- 11:30 a.m.
- **Bread for Life Food Pantry:** Journey Church, 95 Bellevue Ave., **3rd Thursday**, from 9 a.m.- 2 p.m., For more info call 764-5239.

**Clothing Closet: Ruth's Room:** Rio Dell Baptist Church, 100 Butcher St., Rio Dell, **Tuesdays** 9 a.m.- 2 p.m. Call 764-3811 for more information.

**Women's Health Project:** Breast and Gynecology Eel River Valley Outreach Center: 707-726-7919 or 825-8345.

**SAIL:** Staying Active and Independent Living helps prevent falls and broken bones. This free program meets 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. **Mon., Wed., and Fri.** at the at the Rio Dell Baptist Church, 100 Butcher St. Call Susan at 407-8707. Join us!

**Free Produce Available:** Those whose households qualify based on income are reminded of the monthly Mobile Produce Pantry that comes to the Rio Dell Volunteer Fire Department on the **second Wednesday** of each month, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information, contact Food for People at 445-3166.

**Weight-loss group meets at chamber office:** Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS) meets at the Chamber of Commerce office at 406 Wildwood Avenue in Rio Dell **each Friday morning**. Weigh-in is from 8 to 9:30 a.m. to accommodate various schedules, and a program is held from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. All are invited. TOPS is part of a national organization and more can be found at the website [tops.org](http://tops.org). Other local chapters meet in Eureka and McKinleyville. New members are welcome.

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*About the author: Emily Hobelmann, M.S., writes feature stories about the cannabis industry with a creative approach. Her work also includes technical and administrative industry projects, such as drafting standard operating procedures for manufacturing facilities. You can find her local stories online at [www.kymkemp.com](http://www.kymkemp.com) and [www.lostcoastoutpost.com](http://www.lostcoastoutpost.com)*

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EASTER EGG HUNT  
SAT. APRIL 20TH.  
1:00 TO 3:00 P.M.**

