

**Chamber member
profile: Allan Baird seeks
to help communities**



Allan Baird's face crinkles often into an easy smile as he recalls his deep roots in the region and the work he has done for the Fortuna engineering firm

that bears his name. It's easy to see that he enjoys his life and work. Born in Scotia hospital, he grew up in Bridgeville, taking the bus to Fortuna High and staying in town with his grandmother on those days when his sports practice forced him to miss the return bus. "My great grandfather is buried in Hydesville," he says of his family's long tenure in the area.

After graduating from Humboldt State with a degree in civil engineering, Baird worked in Washington State for four years before returning to the area, and working another four years for a local engineering firm. In 1978 he formed his own company with a partner, and in 1982 went solo. "I never wanted to be one of those really big engineering firms," he says of A. M. Baird Engineering and Surveying, of which he is principal, but he is proud of the way his company, with its up-to-date equipment and broad range of skill sets, can service a range of client needs.

Prompt response is another thing his company is known for, he says. With far-flung clients involving a lot of travel, some engineering firms are unable to see a project quickly, so at times contractors have been held up and had to lay off their workers. He is able to get to those remote clients rapidly, partly because he has a diverse client base that makes it likely there will be several jobs in a given area. "We've never had to advertise," Baird notes, getting business from word of mouth.

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Rio Dell-Scotia News

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**JANUARY
2017**

VOL. XVII NO. 1 ~AROUND TOWN~

Commercial Crab Pots – Manufacturing on Wildwood



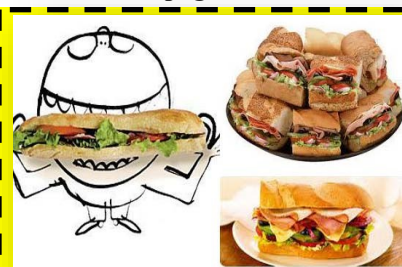
Crabbing season is underway, and the workers at Commercial Crab Pots at 611 Wildwood in Rio Dell are slowing down after their peak season, which runs August through December. Owners Guy and Tina Bravo of Eureka run the business that was started in 1992 by Tina's late husband, John Raxa. Following his death in a boating accident while crabbing in 1999, she was approached by fishermen who wanted to continue to buy the pots he made due to his attention to details in pot construction.

She later married Bravo who was working at Pacific Lumber as the Scotia mill was then called, and in time he was offered a buyout by the company in order to downsize the workforce. He enrolled in business classes at College of the Redwoods under the retraining program the company offered, and started making crab pots. Word of mouth spread in the crabbing community. In 2006 the couple opened the business in Rio Dell. The location is perfect, he says, with rent half what it would be in Eureka. The building is the right size for his operation, has room to store materials, and is easy for trucks to get in and out, as well as being close to the freeway. It's convenient for the workers, who live in Fortuna. Plus, Bravo's parents live in Rio Dell so it's convenient to visit them.

"My wife trained me" to build the pots, Bravo laughs with a nod to the petite woman at his side. "I know how to do it all," she smiles, nodding. The company typically hires six to eight workers, and at peak times with an experienced crew, can turn out 150 pots per week. "It's a work of art," Bravo notes, and requires skills, so it is not one for which you can just add extra people in a rush. There's wrapping the rubber, the most physical part; "knitting," which involves weaving the stainless steel wire to form the cages, and welding.

Last year, the late start of the season and reduced areas open to commercial crabbing due to local crabs having toxic levels of domoic acid cost them business, and they had to shut down for a few months as a result. Some workers left to get other jobs, and the Bravos then had to hire and train new people. "It's tough to find people for a seasonal position," Bravo said, since workers typically want a reliable, year-round job. Since orders come at the last minute, it's not possible to plan ahead, and sometimes there's more orders than he can fill, as a result. Usually the business closes down for a couple months in the summer, before ramping up again in August.

The pots are sold up and down the California coast, mostly from Crescent City to Bodega Bay, and at times to crabbers farther south and in Oregon and Washington. He provides delivery, if needed. Crabbers can need to replace up to 10 percent of their pots in a year, Bravo says, between those lost in the sea and those in need of too much repair. Therefore someone running 500 pots would need to buy 50 new ones each year.



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News and Notes

Scotia Children's Art to be on Exhibit at Morris Graves in Eureka



The work of 18 artistically gifted Scotia students will be displayed in the Youth Gallery at the Morris Graves Museum in Eureka during January, with a gala opening on Saturday, Jan. 7 during Arts Alive, from 6 to 9 p.m. The event is free, as is an art program for youth from 12 to 2 p.m. on Sun., Jan. 8, called the KEET Kids Club. Regular museum hours are Wednesday through Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. with admission of \$5 for adults, \$2 for those over 65, military veterans and students. Children under 17 are free. These Scotia students just completed a four-part series of classes, learning the fundamentals of color and art history from Virginia Wood, who runs the Art on the Road program at the Morris Graves Museum, bringing supplies and lessons to students from all over Humboldt County. The students, from grades K-8, were selected by their teachers to participate in this "gifted and talented" class organized by Sal Steinberg, who coordinates the GATE (Gifted and Talented Education) program. Wood brought lessons about famous artists like Salvador Dali, and the students made color wheels, flower designs, paintings, and sculptures. "It was a fabulous class and a wonderful opportunity for these talented young artists," Steinberg.

Rio Dell and Scotia Schools

- Both schools will be closed for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day on January 16.
- Rio Dell's Parent-Teacher Organization meeting will be Jan. 9 at 4 p.m.
- The school board meeting will be Jan. 11 at 5:30 p.m.
- The school site council will meet at 5 p.m. on Jan. 17.
- A kindness challenge will take place the week of Jan. 23, part of a nationwide effort to promote tolerance, kindness and understanding among students.
- Scotia's school board meeting will be Jan. 12 at 7 p.m.
- The Parent Teacher Organization meeting for the month has been cancelled.

Holiday Hours

- The Rio Dell Community Resource Center will be closed on Monday, Jan. 2, in observation of New Years.

Emergency Food

- Running low on food this week? Get a bag for your family or just for yourself at the Community Resource Center; no income verification needed.

Volunteers needed!

- The Eagle Prairie Arts District is looking for people to volunteer in the art gallery and visitor's center at 406 Wildwood Ave. in Rio Dell. Schedules are flexible, you can meet the public, represent local arts businesses, and help visitors to the community with information. Contact Kim Reid, gallery coordinator, at 707-681-6819 or visit facebook.com/info.epad.

Lety's Restaurant in Rio Dell Has a New Sign

- Lety's restaurant upgraded their sign adding a little class to our town. The hanging sign reflects the high quality food served in this growing business. Thank you Lety's for expressing the quality of both your cuisine and our town!



Massage of the Redwoods

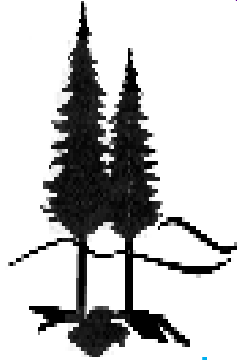
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~Meeting Calendar~

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 second and fourth Saturday of the month starting at 11:00 am with story teller Kathy Frye. 715 Wildwood Ave, 764-3333.

Emergency Food

The Journey Church, 95 Bellevue Ave. Rio Dell, Tuesday & Thursday 9 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Rio Dell-Scotia Chamber of Commerce

406 Wildwood Ave., Rio Dell. For more info call 506-5081.

Bread for Life Food Pantry

143 Main Street, Scotia, 3rd Thursday, from 10 am -2 p.m., For more info call 764-5239.

Clothing Closet

Ruth's Room: Rio Dell Baptist Church, Tuesdays 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. Call 764-3811 for more information.

Eagle Prairie Arts District

Meetings are the 1st Thursday at 6 p.m. at the Gallery/Visitor's Center. Call 506-5081.

Women's Health Project Breast and Gynecology Eel River Valley

Outreach Center:

707-726-7919 or 825-8345

Friday Playgroups

The Community Resource Center provides a First Five playgroup Fridays 10 a.m. to noon at the Early Head Start classroom, 95 Center St., Rio Dell.

SAIL

Staying Active and Independent Living helps prevent falls and broken bones. This free program meets noon - 1 p.m. Mon., Wed., and Fri. at the multi-purpose room at Monument Middle School, 95 Center St., Rio Dell. Call Susan at 407-8707. Join us!

Monday Storytime

Families with children 0-5 years old are welcome to join Community Resource Center staff at the Eagle Prairie School library room, Mondays from 8:20 to 9:20 a.m. to develop childhood literacy through stories and crafts. Snacks are provided. There will not be a Storytime when school is closed.



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Submissions deadline for February newsletter copy is January 20th. Call the Rio Dell-Scotia Chamber of Commerce at 506-5081 to advertise.


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Continued from page 1—Baird. “We’ve done a lot of work in Rio Dell,” he says, including the engineering on the fire hall, area homes, and the surveying of lot splits. His clients have basically been located from Eureka south to Mendocino County, and over to Trinity County. “We’ve done three different hotels in Ukiah,” he adds, as an example.

At the present, his business is experiencing a boom with the demands of cannabis growers seeking to register their businesses. “We’ve got 15 people on staff now,” he says, including four other engineers, surveyors, and people doing computer-aided design (termed CAD).

The cannabis work involves determining if changes the growers have made to their properties meet code, Baird explains, from septic tanks to construction to grading of driveways, and that proper permits have been filed for work done.

Supporting the community is important to Baird, which is why he has been a member of the Rio Dell Scotia Chamber of Commerce for many years. “I won the rubber duck race once,” he chortles at the memory of the Wildwood Days event, 10 or more years ago. “They called me and said I’d won, I told them to keep the money.” He contributes widely. “Whenever there’s a high school fundraiser and the kids come in here, they leave with a check,” he says.

A member of the Rotary, a past-president more than once of the Fortuna chamber, and a member of other area chambers including Garberville and Ferndale, he received the Citizen of the Year award from Fortuna in 2011. A 2015 column in the *Times-Standard* newspaper profiled Baird as a “best boss” and quoted his senior staff engineer Matt Pearson as saying Baird is “very flexible, understanding and hard-working,” and that one should think twice before trying to keep up with him, whether in the mountains surveying or at the end of a long night cooking for one of the many organizations with which he is associated.