

Rio Dell-Scotia News

Local emergency response team formed

A new Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) has been formed of Rio Dell and Scotia residents. A CERT is a group of neighborhood volunteers trained to assist authorities in disasters and other emergencies, including fire safety and suppression, light search and rescue, evacuation and first aid. The goal of CERT training is for communities to be able to strengthen themselves to be more disaster resilient by having a team of trained volunteers who are able to assist first responders



Over a weekend in late April, the Humboldt CERT Coalition held training at the Scotia Volunteer Fire Department. (Sponsored by the McLean Foundation and the Rio Dell Police Department, it was free to all participants.) As a result, 18 people are newly certified, including Mayor Debra Garnes, Mayor Pro Tem Amanda Carter, and Rio Dell Police Chief Greg Allen. The next step is to form a CERT team specifically for the Rio Dell-Scotia area to be mobilized for emergencies in our area, including the larger Humboldt County.

The CERT concept was first developed by the Los Angeles City Fire Department when members traveled to Japan in 1985 to study that country's emergency response plans. Los Angeles fire officials learned that Japan used extensive programs to train neighborhoods in basic emergency response. Soon after, the LAFD began training its own neighborhood watch leaders to perform these skills, with the first team of 30 people completing training in 1986. In 1987, the 5.9 magnitude Whittier Narrows earthquake proved to officials the need to train civilians to better understand emergency response and be able to aid others and meet immediate needs in their communities.

Today, the National CERT Association is a non-profit organization that works with FEMA to support CERT programs across the U.S. There are currently 450 CERT programs in California, and 12 teams in Humboldt County.

(Continued on Page 4)

Case managers, donations tackle needs from quake

A team of case managers is on the ground to help those whose homes or apartments were damaged in the quakes to move forward with repairs or replacement. Two, Rosalie Salazar and Bob Daugherty, are based at the Rio Dell Community Resource Center each weekday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and are employed by Arcata House Partnership, a non-profit that provides assistance to homeless and underserved populations and is one of several agencies assisting in the Rio Dell reconstruction. Another is Changing Tides Family Services, a Eureka-based organization that provides services to families and which also has two case workers who are in Rio Dell at specific days and times. Several of the local case workers are Spanish speaking.

Daugherty said the phone calls directed to the hotline set up by the county are now sent to him and he is working through the calls and messages to make contact with those seeking help. Others drop in throughout the day to learn more and begin the process. In addition, both Changing Tides and Arcata House have personnel at their offices who are prepared to meet with those who find those locations more convenient, perhaps because they have had to relocate to those communities for interim housing.

When interviewed on May 5, Salazar and Daugherty indicated the process was both underway and had a way to go to be fully operational. Salazar spoke of the streamlining of procedures that the participating agencies are working through.

Meanwhile, Daugherty notes, the funds are not there yet and the agencies are still putting things in place. In addition to Arcata House and Changing Tides, the agencies that hired the case workers, there are the ones that will do the building or repair, which include Habitat for Humanity and Hope Crisis Network. Meetings of the various stakeholders are held by Zoom to keep everyone apprised of the progress. "I was in two days of training and it was like drinking from a fire hose," Daugherty said of the amount of information he needed to take in. **(Continued on Page 4)**

Palco Pharmacy closes – see page 3

NOTES AND NEWS

Take the family to the zoo for free

Each month on the first day the library is open, four family passes to the Sequoia Park Zoo are available for checkout with a library card. The pass allows each family (up to two adults and up to six children) to visit the zoo for free. The deal is an arrangement between the zoo and the county library system – passes are available at each county library each month.

The Rio Dell Community Center Corner Presents: Coffee, Connect, Create

Coffee, Connect, Create is a monthly group for Rio Dell and Scotia moms to come together and enjoy a cup of coffee, visit with neighbors, and do a fun craft. “We recognize that being a mom is a tough job, and networking with other moms is so important. We are providing a welcoming space for all moms to feel safe to share,” center coordinator Sarah Reback says.

A different craft is chosen each month, this month's activity will be Pressed Flower Lanterns.



Bike rodeo slated for June 17

Kids three to 18 in Rio Dell and Scotia are invited to a bike rodeo at the fire hall in Rio Dell on Saturday, June 17, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. It will feature “lots of activities, giveaways, and a bike raffle,” according to Sarah Reback, coordinator of the Rio Dell Community Resource Center, who notes, “There will be an obstacle course, bike safety station, easy repair station, and much more!” In addition, the Rio Dell Police Department will be unveiling its new bikes for two of its officers.

Kiwanis event nets benefits to schools

The Rio Dell-Scotia Kiwanis club netted about \$8,000 from its April Bingo Bash and made donations, including \$500 for sporting equipment to the Rio Dell school district and \$250 for snacks for the after-school program at Scotia, as well as \$500 for the AAU (Amateur Athletic Union) traveling girls' basketball team, the Eel Valley Force, comprised of students in Monument Middle School.

Member Dana Webb thanks the Humboldt Redwood Company for sponsoring the event, numerous donors of prizes, and Green's and Palco pharmacies for selling advance tickets, as well as the California Conservation Corp for its volunteers. She notes new members are always welcome. The group meets at Patron's Kitchen at 6 p.m. on the first and third Wednesdays of each month.

New fire truck joins fleet

A new truck was added to the volunteer fire department in a handing off of the keys and photo op May 5. The truck, number 7136, will be housed in Rio Dell and is basically the same as 7135, bought in 2016, which will move to Scotia. Both are all-purpose fire fighting models combining apparatus needed in structure as well as wildland blazes, Chief Shane Wilson explained. “When you answer a call, it's not always what it seems,” he said, so having the equipment for a wide range of needs is essential.



Tim Wilkes is an administrative manager at Burton Fire in Modesto, which, as a dealer for the Minnesota-based manufacturer, Rosenbauer, sold both rigs to the department. He notes that truck features include four-wheel drive; the ability to direct water in two different directions at the same time through two different pumps; to aim a water spray while also driving the truck, and to illuminate an area with a cab-top light.

Chief Wilson said the purchase was part of the department's apparatus replacement plan. The truck going to Scotia, 7135, will replace a 1985 vehicle which the department plans to sell. He notes 7135 cost \$400,000 six years ago, and the new purchase ran \$600,000

Scotia plans graduation, summer camps

Eighth grade graduation at Scotia is June 14 at 7 p.m. and will be held at the Bear River Recreation Center, according to superintendent Amy Gossien, who adds, “We look forward to holding graduation on the stage of our own gym next year!”

Camp Scotia summer camps will be held again this year, July 10 to 14 and July 17 to 21, Gossien notes.

(Notes and News continued on Page 3)

Palco Pharmacy closes

As the word spread on Facebook last month of the imminent closing of Palco Pharmacy, cries of dismay and fond memories of staff concern, kindness and effectiveness were shared. The business has been an institution in the community for generations, dating to the 1860s when The Pacific Lumber Company ran it. Last month its owner for 36 years, Marilyn Ross, sat down to share some memories as the staff marked down items for the clearance sale that would empty the store.



“It’s very surreal,” Ross said of the experience of cleaning out the business in which she had worked since an eight-year-old child, dusting shelves on Saturdays, while her dad, Wendall Dunn, who purchased the business in 1957, filled prescriptions. Ross, having graduated from pharmacy school and married a pharmacist, took over in 1987. Her husband died a decade later and she has run it alone since then.

The staff has been like family, she said, remembering back to the days when Edna McWhorter worked for her dad, and later for herself. They used to kid about who had more seniority. “Edna would translate for the Portuguese-speaking customers,” she recalled, and worked into her 80s before retiring. A law today requires that all pharmacies have access to a service that provides translation as needed into more than two dozen languages for customers not comfortable getting medical information in English.

A long-time employee she credits with making it possible for her to handle the store as a single owner was Daniel Bywater, who came to work at the pharmacy as a teen and showed an ability in business that complimented her own knowledge and proved valuable for decades while completing degrees at what is now Cal Poly Humboldt.

She had actively looked for a buyer who would take over the pharmacy for more than three years, but with no offers in sight, she accepted the Walgreens plan to purchase the records and pharmaceuticals. The records will roll over to the Fortuna Walgreens.

“Change, that’s what life is about,” Ross said. She recalled among the memories of her youth – including a car accident when she was seven that continues to affect her health - watching the Scotia homes damaged by the 1964 flood being burned in the summer of 1965. “The fire department put mannequins in the homes and trained on rescuing them while the houses burned,” she recalled, saying the kids at the time had entertainment for the whole summer.

She was at a family wedding in Idaho in 1992 when someone told her there had been an earthquake in Scotia. Hard to rattle, she shrugged off concern until someone called in the middle of the night and told her, “Turn on the news, your store is burning.”

Rebuilding, she found herself widowed five years later, and later still, married to David Fouche, adding six step-children to her family of three. She was in Redding dealing with his final illness when the offer came from Walgreen’s that would let her retire. “I wish David were here to do the things we had planned,” she said wistfully of her next step.

Ross thanks her customers for their support and friendship, and expresses the hope she will be able to continue to see them. She plans to remain at her home in Rio Dell but also to travel the loop through the Pacific Northwest, Idaho and Utah that enables her to visit her six siblings, widowed mom, and 10 children and step-children, including one foster child, and their families. She speaks of the goal of helping make the world a better place. A favorite expression is, “We are all immortal as long as someone remembers who we were.” With stories to share going back through the generations she has known, Ross will keep many souls immortal for a long time to come.

(Notes and News continued from Page 2)

Donations received to fund prizes in the Wildwood Days Parade

Thanks to Humboldt Redwood Company for donating \$250 to the chamber for use in the Wildwood Days parade, and to Coast Central Credit Union and Redwood Capital Bank which each donated \$150. The funds are used to purchase prizes from area businesses (rather than asking for donations) to award to the winners in the various categories. The theme this year is *Back in the Saddle Again*. Entering is free and open to all.

Local emergency response team formed- Continued from, Page 1

“The December 26 and January 1 earthquakes highlighted the need for extra disaster response training in the Rio Dell—Scotia area,” Carter notes, adding, “Our own little pocket of the Eel River Valley is that much more prepared for potential emergency situations that impact the lives of people in our community!” Trainings are on-going, and anyone interested in getting certified and joining a local CERT can find more information on the Humboldt CERT Coalition website at www.humboldtcert.com. “We live in a beautiful area full of wonderful people willing to volunteer their time to help their communities in times of need,” Carter says. “Many thanks and deep appreciation go out to everyone involved in sponsoring this training and especially to the people who showed such enthusiasm for aiding others in the worst of situations!”

Case managers, donations tackle needs from quake– Continue from, Page 1 Many groups involved

A variety of committees are also involved in addressing pieces of the puzzle that must be unwound. They are comprised of members of the Long-Term Recovery Group, which grew out of the initial COAD (Community Organizations Active in Disaster) that arose in the days after the first earthquake. For instance, one committee, called Unmet Needs, looks at situations such as when people seek help paying for gas or to repair vehicles to commute long distances to work, to drive their children to school and to care for pets, after having to accept temporary housing far from their daily range of activities. Daugherty cited Jessica Gregorio of Pay it Forward Humboldt who was among those seeking gas cards to help these people finance their unexpected expense of driving.

The case workers have started to meet with those seeking help to rebuild or replace their living space. Home owners must show there are no liens against their damaged homes and that the property taxes are paid up. Renters need to establish the amount they had been paying for rent. Applicants must supply financial information to qualify for assistance. Once that information is in place, the applicant signs a contract outlining the steps to come and the package is put before representatives of the various agencies, to see what help can be offered. “We have a couple we are getting ready to submit,” Salazar says of the first completed applications.

There are four levels of need, Daugherty said, by which applications are rated. The elderly and single parents are prioritized though, he notes, most of the situations in Rio Dell are of the highest or second highest level because of the severity of damage to the home and the need of the residents for assistance.

Nonprofit steps up to help

Meanwhile PEO (which stands for Philanthropic Educational Organization) Chapter WA has awarded 15 grants totaling over \$65,000 from its Loving Concern Fund to residents of Rio Dell who experienced financial hardship from the earthquake. In addition, the chapter awarded six grants to individuals in the community who have experienced devastating situations to help the recipients cover expenses related to medical treatments, housing and other urgent needs.

PEO member and Eureka realtor Betsey Thode explained that the international organization, with five chapters in Humboldt County alone (chapter names, in this case WA, are assigned in alphabetical order as chapters are formed, and after running through the alphabet once, new designations start with two letters), has had a low profile and typically focuses on grants to support women’s education.

But in California the organization’s Loving Concern Fund is unique and designed to help those in need, particularly women and children, who are facing difficult situations such as natural disasters, medical emergencies and financial hardships. Thode explained that another local member, Diana Fraga, knew Reback and learned through her of the needs in the community, resulting in the grants. The organization makes money through fundraisers but also has received bequeaths from members and others who have died, which enables this level of giving.

More information can be found at peocalifornia.org.

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