

# Rio Dell-Scotia News

**Save the Date! Dec. 7, 5 p.m. for the Annual Tree lighting  
406 Wildwood, Rio Dell**



Shane Wilson Rio  
Dell Fire Chief

## Area fire departments propose merger

A series of outreach events in early November will seek to inform residents of area communities about a proposal to merge four area fire departments (see Notes and News, pg. 2 for more). Rio Dell chief Shane Wilson explains that, while such talks have happened in the past, action earlier this year by the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors presented a new, fiscally feasible path to achieve the goal.

The county is a patchwork of fire districts with gaps in their coverage, Wilson explained, and departments routinely cover areas outside their jurisdiction but often are not reimbursed for those efforts. The county measure, called the Property Tax Revenue Sharing Agreement, established a way for the districts to effectively synch up their borders to avoid coverage gaps and establish a sustainable funding mechanism.

The proposed merger would combine departments from Rio Dell to Redcrest, and extend Rio Dell's western fire district borders to meet those of Ferndale. For Rio Dell, there will be no visible change, Wilson said, except the department would have more equipment and staffing options. Existing agreements with Ferndale and Fortuna departments will provide back-up coverage as before, should the department need to support fire suppression efforts further south.

Scotia's fire department, once funded by Pacific Lumber Company and now by the Town of Scotia LLC (as opposed to the Community Services District), is private and would be without a funding source when the properties are sold under Phase 3 of the transition plan, at which time the Town of Scotia corporation goes away. "Scotia responds to fires in Stafford and Shively out of the goodness of their hearts," Wilson said, but doesn't receive funds for calls outside of Scotia.

The Rio Dell department has helped launch a fire fighting group in Shively with training and surplus equipment, to provide closer and faster coverage to that area. Redcrest's fire-fighting group, meanwhile, is a non-profit which holds fund-raisers to cover its expenses, Wilson continued, raising about \$9,000 per year – estimated to increase under the merger to \$50,000 per year.

Under the proposed merger, the three communities – Scotia, Shively and Redcrest – would assess homes in their service area at the same rate that Rio Dell (and most fire departments in the county) now do, a fee that for many would be \$100/year. Wilson notes the formula equates to \$25/year for one unit, defined as a vacant house lot. A typical one-family house in town is defined as being four units (\$100/year) while other situations have various other allocations of units assigned to them – a rural residential parcel is six units, for instance, or \$150 per year, and more is charged for properties in areas not served by a municipal water line. **(Continued on Page 3.)**

## Chamber slates tree lighting, seeks help for work day

The third annual Dennis Wendt Christmas Tree Lighting in Rio Dell will be held on Sat., Dec. 7 at 5 p.m. at the Rio Dell-Scotia Chamber of Commerce office, 406 Wildwood Ave. Bring the family to this free, open-to-all event that will feature refreshments and activities provided by the Community Resource Center, live music, Santa and elves.

But before this can happen, some work needs to be done in town, so the chamber is hoping folks with some free time the Saturday after Thanksgiving will spare a few hours to pitch in and ready the community with lights, decorative seasonal cutouts, and more. Won't you turn out with family and friends to help?

Meet at the chamber, 406 Wildwood, at 9 a.m. or come later to Memorial Park, across from City Hall, to help in a number of projects and parts of town. See Notes & News, page 2, for more about how this project is linked to a goal of making the city a destination for families looking for lighting displays, bringing visitors to town. Mark your calendar, and *like* the chamber's Facebook page for more details to come on the work day!

## *News and Notes*

### **Fire districts set informational meetings**

Learn more about the plans to merge four area fire departments (see page 1 story) at an upcoming meeting:

Nov. 7, 5:30 p.m. at the Winema Theater in Scotia

Nov. 8, 5:30 p.m. at the Redcrest Community Center (also formerly known as the Grange)

Nov. 9, noon – 3 p.m. at the Firemen's Park in Rio Dell.

The last event, meant for anyone from any of the communities unable to attend before, will include a barbeque.

### **Be a part of the change**

A goal of the Chamber of Commerce is to expand the holiday lighting and decorative display each year, enabled by donations from area businesses, organizations and individuals. But more decorations means more work, getting them up . . . and down. That will happen the Saturday after Thanksgiving again this year (see story, page 1). Won't you be part of the fun, and turn out with family and friends to help? People are needed throughout the day, for projects that include wrapping the trees in Memorial Park with lights (which have to come down each year so the trees don't sever the wires as they grow), putting decorations on light poles, and setting holiday-themed cut-outs around town.

Meet at the chamber, 406 Wildwood, at 9 a.m. or come later to Memorial Park, across from City Hall, to help. The plan is that the city's lights will become a feature drawing others from throughout the region to spend time, and money, in town. Your help can make the difference in a showy display. Like the chamber's Facebook page for more details to come!

### **Rio Dell schools slate meetings, closures**

Schools will be closed November 1st (In service), November 11th (Veterans Day), and November 25 – 29 (Thanksgiving Week).

There will be early release at 1 p.m. November 18-22 for parent/teacher conferences. The school board will meet Nov. 13 at 5:30 p. m.

### **Resource Center sets holiday food distributions**

The Community Recourse Center will be providing holiday food baskets to qualifying individuals and families who come to the food pantry on Nov. 21 for their Thanksgiving basket, and Dec. 19 for Christmas. The hours for both will be 9 a.m. to noon. A protein and larger than usual vegetable portion will be included in each basket. Individuals new to the pantry can self-certify that their income is at or below the required level \$1,561.25 per month for one person, or \$2,113.75 for two persons; for each additional person in the household, add \$552.50 of monthly income. Foods have been purchased with monies received from grants.

### **Help restock the food pantry**

Barrels will be out in the post offices in Rio Dell and Scotia and in Root 101 Nursery to accept food donations Nov. 4 through Dec. 17 to build up the food pantry supplies with items for holiday baskets and restocking into next year.

### **Check out these giving opportunities to help area families**

The Community Resource Center is working with Toys for Tots to provide gifts for needy families this December. Those wishing to donate stocking stuffer items may buy them at, or bring them to, Dollar General in Rio Dell where a donation bin will be available. Larger gifts are only being accepted for children ages 15 to 18, for whom no other source of gifts is available. Sara Faught of the resource center says popular and affordable items for young people in this age group are hoodies, gift certificates to area shops and blue tooth speakers.

### **Families can get help with gifts for children**

Families wishing help providing holiday gifts for their children this year may complete an application in advance at either the Rio Dell or Scotia school office or at the Community Resource Center in Rio Dell, stating the name, age and other information about the child for whom the gift is intended, to aid in selection of appropriate items. Gifts will be provided through the Toys for Tots program operated by the U.S. Marine Corps, and will be directed to families with an application on file based on the child's age, size and gender. Gifts may be picked up locally on Dec. 14 at the Rio Dell Baptist Church between noon and 4 p.m. The person picking up will need a photo ID to establish it is the family member applying.

### **Save the date!**

Sat., Dec. 7 at 5 p.m. will be the annual tree lighting at the Rio Dell-Scotia Chamber of Commerce, 406 Wildwood Ave., Rio Dell. The event is free and open to all, and family-friendly. The Community Resource Center will provide refreshments and activities for children; live holiday music will be provided by the Baptist church choir and Scotia Saxes, and Santa and elves will be on hand. Make time for this annual tradition, named for the past three years for Dennis Wendt, Fortuna businessman and philanthropist, who died in 2017.

## Fire departments propose merger (Continued from Page 1)

A second funding source as a result of the merger is that the Scotia-to-Redcrest current districts would also be able to receive funds, as Rio Dell's fire district now does, from the state, collected through property taxes. Those funds, received by the county, are sent to the state and then paid out to entities such as school districts and fire districts and are seen as a line item on the tax bills property owners pay. That amount – or the property tax in general – will not be affected by the merger, Wilson says.

There are several steps to go and a timeline to be followed. Contracts are being reviewed by attorneys, apparatus from the various departments that would be brought to the merger is being appraised, and the plan is to go to the Humboldt Local Area Formation Committee (LAFCO), an organization that oversees the orderly growth and changes of agencies such as water, fire and community service districts, in the spring of 2020.

Wilson points out how valuable Measure Z funding has been in this effort, enabling the retaining of county staff to expedite the complex process, and also to pay the fees involved – the LAFCO fee alone is \$10,000.

## Kiwanis elects new officers, names goals

The Rio Dell-Scotia chapter of Kiwanis International celebrated its first anniversary earlier this year and looks to the future with a full slate of plans. This year's president is Connie Griffith-O'Neal; vice-president is Shawna Gutierrez; treasurer is Amanda Huber, and secretary is Carole Arrington. Others on the seven-member board are Rachael Sovereign and Drew Mentzer. Harry Smith is immediate past president.

Goals for the year include getting a greenhouse at Rio Dell elementary, remodeling the snack shack with the volunteer fire department at the Firemen's Park in Rio Dell, and possibly starting a Builders Club, a middle-school-aged Kiwanis organization, at one of the two local schools, plus hosting the second annual Fruhlingsfest (a German-themed beer festival) in March and participating in Wildwood Days again. Movies in the park, a monthly series started this summer, is also on the docket for next summer, as well as creating an increased awareness of the Kiwanis organization for those unaware of what it does, through greater outreach.

Dana Webb, a Kiwanis member since age 10, who grew up locally and was among the group that first established the local chapter, notes she is most proud of how the community has responded to Kiwanis, supporting its events and donating to its activities, adding that the membership is a mix of long-time residents and those newer to the community, providing a range of ideas.

"Kiwanis's main goal is to be a service organization specifically focused around helping children -- one child, one community at a time," she says.

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## Chamber to elect board of directors, fill open seat

A seven-member board oversees the chamber of commerce, planning events and activities such as the annual holiday display and tree lighting (see stories elsewhere) and the Wildwood Days parade; holding informational meetings on a variety of subjects that are free to the public, and more. The board members are elected for two-year terms, with three seats open in one year and four in the next.

Members up for re-election this year include Jim Brickley, a semi-retired house painter who has taken on a number of beautification projects around the city sprucing up signs, painting the chamber building façade, creating and updating decorative cutouts for various holidays, and working with the city and the Eagle Prairie Arts District to get sculptures installed on the median throughout town. (Continued on Page 4)

Jim  
Brickley



Tracy  
O'Connell



Gabriel  
Smith



## Rio Dell-Scotia News

Is free of charge and published on the first of each month by the Rio Dell-Scotia Chamber of Commerce and the Rio Dell Community Resource Center. Funded by local businesses and the St. Joseph Health System. 650 copies distributed in Rio Dell, Scotia, and Fortuna by the Rio Dell Baptist Church.

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**Submissions deadline for December newsletter copy is November 8**

**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.cyourself.com](http://www.cyourself.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 Belleview Ave. Rio Dell, **Tuesday & Thursday** 9 a.m.- 11:30 a.m.
- **Bread for Life Food Pantry:** Journey Church, 95 Belleview Ave., **3rd Thursday**, from 9 a.m.-12 Noon, For more info call 764-5239.

**Clothing Closet: Ruth's Room:** Rio Dell Baptist Church, 100 Butcher St., Rio Dell, **Tuesdays**, 9 a.m.– 12 Noon Call 764-3811 for more information.

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

**Free exercise program open to all meeting at Chamber of Commerce:** An exercise group meets Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at the Rio Dell-Scotia Chamber of Commerce, 406 Wildwood Ave. in Rio Dell, from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The group is open to all ages and seeks new members. Formerly called SAIL, it focuses on improving balance, flexibility and range of motion to help prevent falls and broken bones.

**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.

**Chamber Board (Continued from Page 3)** Tracy O'Connell, retired, staffs the chamber office on Tuesdays and produces most of this monthly, free newsletter about local events that is printed by the Community Resource Center and distributed in three communities, as well as being available online.

Gabriel Smith manages Root 101 Nursery and as a liaison to that business arranges donations of goods and services such as storage for the chamber's seasonal decorations meant to brighten Wildwood and attract visitors to stop and look around.

A fourth position is open, and those interested are encouraged to contact the chamber at [rdschamber@gmail.com](mailto:rdschamber@gmail.com) to get on the ballot. It's a great opportunity to get involved, see projects come to life that you are interested in, and meet new people.

Voting will close in mid-December, the four highest vote recipients will be declared winners, and officers for the coming year will be elected in January from among the board members seated for the year 2020.

Members elected last year, with another year to go on their terms, include Nick Angeloff, archaeologist with his own business in Rio Dell as well as serving as co-director of the Cultural Resources Facility at Humboldt State, who currently serves as president; Sharon Holt, manager for Scotia Band and office manager for Harland Law Firm in Fortuna; and Susan Pryor, member of the Scotia Community Services District and realtor with Action Realty with an office in Fortuna.