

Season's Greetings

In some ways it is hard to believe four years have gone by. My second term will begin in January 2011, and I am very much looking forward to continuing to serve as your Supervisor.

There has been a huge paradigm shift from 2007 when I first took office to the present day. The economic recession has hit Marin hard; our infrastructure is in disrepair; individuals in need of the County's safety net programs have doubled; the State budget is so dire that we expect more programs will be shifted to counties and cities with no funding attached; the number of homeless families is increasing (354 in Novato) and in the 5th District I see concern among our residents regarding their local government.

I was saddened to see the suspicion generated when work began on state-mandated housing elements, which are required by law. Naming potential sites for possible affordable housing is a far cry from seeing housing built. Final approval of individual projects is still made by the duly elected city council or board of supervisors after a lengthy process with ample opportunity for public input.

Affordable housing does not equal crime. In most instances it represents hope for hard working families who want to be able to afford a home and a shorter commute, in a community where their children can grow and thrive.

Continued on Page 2

SMART Update

I recently submitted the following *Marin Voice*, which was published in the *Marin I.J.* on December 2, 2010:

At a November 6 workshop, the SMART Board approved an initial phase for the rail and bike path from Railroad Square in Santa Rosa to the Marin Civic Center. This was the first public discussion of a shortfall that grew from \$155 million to \$350 million over a few months, days after the shortfall and potential alternatives were released.

Several Marin SMART directors indicated the same-day vote was unusual and as I said at the time, unwise. It didn't allow time for the board or public to consider, ask questions, and come to the best decision. For this reason, I abstained.

I have since heard from those who: have always believed other options are better; support the approved phase as "we must build something and federal dollars will come"; voted for SMART but are concerned about bad process, rushed decisions and want more cost saving alternatives; or support SMART but say the initial segment isn't enough for Marin, and want to get the train into San Rafael.

This feedback confirms my approach since joining the SMART board in 2009. Whether or not someone voted for the train, all are paying for it, and everyone's interests are the same. Taxpayers deserve prudent management of their dollars, transparency regarding finances, and an approach that serves the most communities.

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OPPORTUNITIES FOR INPUT ON SMART:

The SMART Board of Directors meets the 3rd Wednesday of each month

Location alternates between San Rafael and Santa Rosa

The next meeting is Wednesday, Dec 15, 1:30pm

Sonoma County BOS Chambers
575 Administration Drive
Santa Rosa, CA

Committee meeting dates can be found at www.sonomamarintrain.org (click 'Documents', then 'Board Archive')



Season's Greetings (continued from page 1)

There is a growing divide in our community between “housing advocates” and “those against affordable housing”. I don’t believe it is accurate or wise to lump people into one category or the other and I believe there are areas of agreement and opportunities to work together to achieve our goals: to provide workforce housing and improve social equity in Marin, while still keeping the essence and character of our community.

For example, I know that groups who are working to provide more affordable housing agree that Novato Square is a poor choice for affordable housing and disagree with the Novato City staff recommendation for 150 units in San Marin, maintaining that such density in that location is too high. They have put forward the idea that housing for Novato school district employees should be explored on that site. These are areas where there is hope for compromise and coming together.

This week, the Board of Supervisors approved our 2011 legislative plan. The plan serves as a guide for Marin County legislative initiatives and priorities for the coming year. On the list of potential state legislation: *“Explore amendments to relevant sections of the California Government Code or other administrative rules or regulations that would allow a broader range of affordable housing options to be eligible to receive increased housing element credits and/or appropriately re-classify Marin County as a ‘suburban’ county for the purposes of State Housing Element density requirements.”* (Currently, Marin County is classified as “metropolitan” due to its proximity to San Francisco.)

We will be working with our state representatives to find opportunities for a broader range of options that would be eligible to receive state housing element credits including: receiving a higher percentage for conversion units and allowing credits for inclusionary housing and senior assisted living.

Let’s take the opportunity in this season that epitomizes love, forgiveness and hope to reach out to our neighbors and the strangers among us no matter what race, color, creed or religion to work together to make our County and our Country what it was meant to be: welcoming, fair and great. And let us also remember the brave men and women who are fighting overseas to keep us safe.

I WISH YOU ALL A VERY HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON AND A HEALTHY AND PEACEFUL 2011.



Important Facts About Housing Elements

- The State of California requires each city and county to adopt a Housing Element as part of their General Plan, which must be reviewed and certified by the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HUD).
- The State mandates that Housing Elements must be updated every five years.
- Affordable housing sites listed in Housing Elements are merely “potential” sites. Neither the existing owner, nor subsequent owners, will be forced to sell their property or build affordable housing on that site, nor are they restricted as to who they can sell to. Affordable housing becomes an eligible use for the property.
- If a land owner is interested in building affordable housing on a site identified in the Housing Element, the land owner must proceed through the local jurisdiction’s normal building and approval process that is used for all development projects. This includes submitting an application and required plans, acquiring necessary permits, receiving design review and planning approval, and holding public hearings.
- The City of Novato’s Housing Element only applies to incorporated Novato. The County does not have any jurisdiction over the City’s Housing Element. The County is required to complete its own housing element which includes the unincorporated lands in Marin.



SMART Update (continued from page 1)

Starting in February 2009, I have requested updated sales tax projections and financial analysis that reflect the current economy. I've stressed that numbers be conservative, independently reviewed, and cover revenues and expenses over the life of Measure Q. I understood that updates to all strategic plan elements would be presented at the November 6 workshop, and the SMART board would consider alternatives over 2-3 months, allowing public awareness and input.

I've pushed for webcasting meetings so the public can access discussions about our largest capital project in history. I've pressed to be proactive in communicating with the public, and to shed a mentality that is too focused on who supported Measure Q and who didn't. Classifying any question as an attack, and anyone who asks as opposition, doesn't serve the project well.

The first approved segment clearly benefits Sonoma, providing transit between Sonoma's two biggest population centers, and into Marin. But within Marin, it only travels between Novato and the Civic Center, with no connectivity to other transit to head east or west for jobs or school, or south for the Ferry, airport, or transit into San Francisco. Funding for additional phases is uncertain, and more information is needed on whether "bus bridges" are workable. It's not enough to build "something"; it must make sense. If the initial segment doesn't get to downtown San Rafael, it doesn't make sense for Marin.

There's no conflict between asking hard questions and working to make SMART succeed. Protecting taxpayers and safeguarding the project require the same approach. Bond debt is a fixed cost in any budget -- only what is left over can be used to run the trains. Bonding based on faulty assumptions will doom the project.

On November 30, the Board of Supervisors requested detailed information on the proposed Marin Civic Center terminus and requested that SMART not commit to debt on behalf of taxpayers until we receive responses, as well as the financial analysis being conducted by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.

The SMART Board is scheduled to consider bond approval on December 15. I believe we need fully vetted financials and an agreement to prioritize getting to downtown San Rafael to take that vote.



WINTER NEWS AND EVENTS

The Winter newsletter from County Parks & Open Space has just been released—and is chock full of FREE activities to take full advantage of Marin's natural wonders during the Winter season. Visit:

www.maringov.org/Depts/PK/Main/Newsletter.aspx

- **News**
- **Volunteer Opportunities**
- **Naturalist-led Walks**
- **Naturalist-led Family Walks**
- **Ranger Events**
- **Dog-friendly Hikes**

view map
of all lands



At: www.maringov.org/Depts/PK.aspx

New Parks & Open Space Website

Parks & Open Space have launched www.marinparks.org!

We hope you find the navigation more intuitive, the site more useful, and the overall experience more enjoyable.

As the seasons change throughout the year, the website will change too, reflecting the colors and natural cycles of Marin County's parks and open space system.

Check out new features, including an interactive activities and amenities database, an enhanced interactive map (expanded to include parks and recreational facilities), and a new online calendar of naturalist walks, family walks, volunteer days, and ranger events. We'll continue to roll out more features and pages over the next few weeks and months. Thank you for visiting!



Message on the County Budget from Marin's County Administrator

Matthew Hymel, our County Administrator, recently sent a message to all County employees that I want to share:

I was recently asked how Marin County has avoided the deeper budget cuts seen in so many California counties. To date, we've had no furloughs, no reductions in employee salaries and 16 employee layoffs. Like communities across the nation, Marin County continues to adapt to a new economic reality. We have fared better because we have a shared value of being financially sustainable, making responsible choices, providing excellent public service and meeting our financial obligations to employees. In the future we will need to be a smaller organization, but we will still strive to be a better, more adaptable one as well.

Living within Our Means

This past July, the Board of Supervisors adopted our Fiscal Year 2010-11 budget, which included significant reductions. These reductions were necessary primarily due to the decline in local revenues, as well as substantial increases in retirement related costs. Departments have been working hard to effectively address our long-term budget challenges. We have also taken a number of steps, including our hiring freeze and the implementation of a long-term restructuring process, to close much of our budget gap. Over the past three years, we have eliminated over 180 positions. Most of these were eliminated through attrition, although this year we were faced with some layoffs to help balance the budget for the first time since the early 1990's.

Internal Structural Shortfall

Indications are that we will experience slow to flat economic growth for the foreseeable future. Here in Marin, our revenues are not keeping pace with the costs of providing services, and recovery is projected to remain painfully slow. The most significant component of our budget problem going forward relates to continued growth in pension and retiree healthcare costs for our employees. We are projecting a \$14.2 million shortfall over the next three years. Any pay increases would add to this projected budget gap, for which we would need further service cuts or increased revenues. These projections do not reflect the risk of further budget cuts from the State.

State Budget Outlook

The nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office recently estimated a \$25 billion State budget shortfall, nearly a quarter of their annual budget. Because many of the safety net services we provide are largely supported by state and federal funds, state budget cuts could result in significant reductions in our safety net services to our residents. Given our own projected shortfall, we cannot backfill the programs that are cut by the State. One of our biggest challenges is finding the best way to provide critical safety net services with reduced State and federal resources.

Our Plan to Address Our Ongoing Challenges

My office is releasing instructions for the FY 2011-12 budget preparation process this week. Departments will be asked to submit 5% net county cost reduction scenarios. Additionally, to address our ongoing challenges, we will ask departments to take a multi-year look at their operations to consider longer-term budgetary solutions.

Upcoming Employee Budget Forums

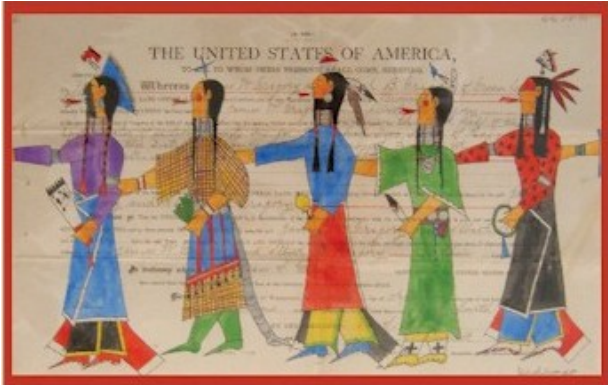
Beginning next month, I will hold meetings to update employees on the County's economic outlook and budget strategy, and to provide an opportunity for employees to ask questions.

As always, I want to thank you for your continued commitment and service to our community and the County organization.

I recognize that we continue to face challenging circumstances, and we will need to make difficult decisions moving forward. Employees have played an important role in these efforts to date, and I will be relying on your continued ideas and contributions. I am confident that our combined efforts will ensure that we continue to provide a high level of service to our community.

- Matthew Hymel, County Administrator

Please Join Me — Support Novato's Own Museum of the American Indian



The Marin Museum of the American Indian is the only Native American museum on a village site in the entire Bay Area

In honor of Native American Heritage Month, which occurred in November, I want to share one of the best-kept secrets in Marin, the Museum of the American Indian — located right here in Novato.

Founded in 1967, the museum was designed to serve as a repository for unearthed archaeological objects related to the original inhabitants of the region, the Coast Miwok people.

Sadly, we risk losing this treasure due to declining donations — but you can help. **In mid-November, I offered a challenge grant to the community:** I will donate \$1 for every \$1 donated by the community between now and Dec. 15, 2010, up to \$5,000. I am pleased to report that as of this writing, the museum is over halfway there.

Contact the Museum's Executive Director Colleen Hicks at (415) 897-4064 with your contribution. Be sure to mention that it should be applied towards Judy Arnold's challenge grant.

The museum still houses a large collection of Coast Miwok artifacts, but today its programs and collections represent Native American cultures from across the entire continent. Various exhibits help both adults and children understand and appreciate the diversity and beauty of Native American art and culture.

One of the most impressive museum programs is the educational program that explores the history and culture of Native Americans in California and other regions of the country, which also fulfills the state curriculum requirements for social studies. Four thousand school children from every county in the Bay Area visit the museum each year!

As the only Native American museum on a village site in the entire Bay Area, it is truly a unique place to visit and learn. Please call or visit the museum, and consider a donation or offer to volunteer. Novato is so blessed to have this museum that brings visitors from all over the Bay Area, and it needs our help.

For more information, or to donate, visit www.marinindian.com or call (415) 897-4064.

Pertussis (Whooping Cough) in Marin

Marin County and other counties in California are experiencing outbreaks of Pertussis, also known as Whooping Cough. The Marin County health department is tracking cases and contacts, as well as providing guidance and information to health care providers and the public.

Pertussis is a highly contagious bacterial illness spread by coughs and sneezes. People sick with pertussis have severe coughing attacks that can last for months.

Vaccination is the best defense against whooping cough. However, the immunity from vaccines wears off over time and pertussis booster vaccine rates in adolescents and adults continue to be low. As a result, pertussis continues to circulate widely in California, resulting in the hospitalization and death of young infants who are too young to get their shots.

In response to the high levels of disease and death from pertussis in California during 2010, California Department of Public Health is recommending that all Californians make sure they are immunized against pertussis, especially if they are in contact with infants.

For more information on updated case counts and trends, questions and answers about pertussis, and where to get vaccinated, please visit the Marin County website at www.co.marin.ca.us and click on "Pertussis/Whooping Cough" in the Information section of the home page.



CALL FOR NOMINATIONS — 2010 LOOK WHO'S GETTING IT DONE AWARD

In 2007 I started the annual LOOK WHO'S GETTING IT DONE AWARD. I make this award every year in January.

The award recognizes someone in the 5th District who "got something done" for our community. The winner is featured in my "County Connection" article in the Novato Advance, in my newsletter, and on my County webpage.

If you would like to nominate someone for the 2010 Look Who's Getting it Done award, please contact my aide Tanya Albert at talbert@co.marin.ca.us.

Marin Economic Forum Releases First Economic Bulletin

Our local economy remains one of my top priorities as I prepare to begin my second term. My focus on this issue over the past several years includes working actively to turn the idea of an organization focused on our unique Marin economy into a reality, which happened earlier this year with the formation of the Marin Economic Forum as a public-private partnership.

The MEF was conceived out of the work of the Marin Economic Commission that began in 1992. The commission authorized two studies that outlined targeted industries that would thrive in Marin and should be encouraged to come here. The recently launched MEF aims to strengthen Marin's targeted industries and businesses through retention efforts, cluster development activities and business attraction.

The study identified the following targeted industries: agri-tourism (food product manufacturing, tourism/hospitality, and boutique accommodations); core technology (multimedia/digital arts, engineering and business software, environmental technology, and biotechnology); built environment (green building, commercial real estate, energy efficiency, and water efficiency); health (residential care, alternative medicine, alternative methods, and biomedical research); and financial services (wealth management, boutique consulting, insurance, and banking).

MEF hit the ground running with a volunteer board drawn from targeted industries all around the county, key local business sponsors, and the excellent efforts of Sonoma State University Economics Department Chair Rob Eyler, who has performed the Herculean task of serving simultaneously as interim CEO and MEF economist during our first year.

Last month, the MEF released the first Marin Economic Bulletin, providing critical data and benchmarks for our local economy – moving beyond historical views that simply group Marin with San Francisco or the Greater Bay Area in various economic statistics and forecasts. The bulletin provides Marin-specific data, forecasts and analysis produced by MEF for several categories: **Incomes and Spending; Labor Markets and Prices; Real Estate and Financial Markets;** and **Social and Environmental** factors affecting economic choices. It also provides state and national context, commissioned from Marin-based Beacon Economics. This information has obvious value to businesses looking to locate or grow in Marin in a sound and sustainable manner. In addition, I can't emphasize enough how critical it is for local policymakers to have this data as we consider the effects of various decisions before us, and to represent you effectively.

The Fall 2010 Bulletin illustrates the duration of any recovery locally depends on how innovation and entrepreneurship drive incomes and jobs through the first half of the new decade. It is important for Marin to seize opportunities and incentives specific to our targeted industries. This will be a focus of MEF activities. To read the **Fall 2010 Economic Bulletin** Executive Summary and/or purchase the full report, visit www.marineconomicforum.org. MEF will provide Economic Bulletins on a biennial basis. Look for the next Economic Bulletin in the spring for a forecast through mid-2011.

In the meantime, MEF has just launched a search for a full-time CEO, and the Nominating Committee is also working to issue the application process for 2011 board seats. Work continues by MEF task forces focused on attracting and retaining targeted industries as well as interacting with local governments and public agencies to ensure that our processes are as clear, efficient and timely as they can be.

I truly believe that local economic sustainability is the key to achieving our local civic, environmental and social equity goals. I am delighted that MEF is now established and under way.





Judy Arnold, Marin County Supervisor

DISTRICT 5 COUNTY CONNECTION NEWSLETTER

3501 Civic Center Drive
Suite 329
San Rafael, CA 94903
415 499-7331
www.co.marin.ca.us

District 5 Supervisor Aides:

Tanya Albert
talbert@co.marin.ca.us
415.499.7371

Carolyn Glendening
cglendening@co.marin.ca.us
415.499.7395

January 2011

Calendar grid for January 2011 with days of the week (SU-SA) and dates 1-31.

February 2011

Calendar grid for February 2011 with days of the week (SU-SA) and dates 1-28.

Schedule of Events

- Jan 4—Board of Supervisors Meeting
Jan 11—Board of Supervisors Meeting
Jan 17— MLK Holiday (county offices closed)
Jan 19—1:30pm, SMART Board Meeting
Jan 25—Board of Supervisors Meeting
Jan 27—7pm, Transportation Authority of Marin Meeting
Jan 31—10am, Transit District Meeting
Feb 1— Board of Supervisors Meeting
Feb 8—Board of Supervisors Meeting
Feb 15—Board of Supervisors Meeting
Feb 16—1:30pm, SMART Board Meeting
Feb 21— Presidents Day (county offices closed)
Feb 24—7pm, Transportation Authority of Marin Meeting

All Board of Supervisors, Transit District, and TAM Meetings are open to the public and are held in the BOS Chambers in the Marin Civic Center at 3501 Civic Center Drive, Suite 329.

Meeting locations for SMART Board meetings vary; visit www.sonomamarintrain.org, then click on "Documents", then "Board Archive" for details.

Start times for BOS meetings can vary. For start times and agenda packet materials for upcoming as well as minutes of prior meetings:

Go to the County of Marin website at www.co.marin.ca.us
Click on "Board of Supervisors"
Click on "Meeting Archive" near the top of the page

BOS meetings are also webcast live. To watch:

Go to the County of Marin website at www.co.marin.ca.us
Click on "Board of Supervisors"
Click on "Live Video Broadcast" near the top of the page

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