

### **KWNE FFC Reports Q1, 2021**

The outbreak at the Mendocino County Jail continues with testing, there have been 76 people testing positive. The Mendocino County Sheriff's Office reports 63 of those are inmates and right now there are 39 active cases. On Saturday 17 inmates were recorded as recovered since the outbreak started Dec. 19th. First a corrections deputy tested positive. On Friday an ambulance took one of the inmates to the hospital who was having trouble breathing. The rest of the positive cases were isolated, but seven inmates who tested positive have been released through the courts or finishing time served. 13 staffers tested positive too, five have recovered. The Sheriff's office reports largely isolating the outbreak area, but a small number of inmates were positive outside the original quarantine. They say they'll continue to test and monitor those affected.

01/04/21

A woman from Gualala reported missing before the holiday weekend has been found dead. The Sheriff's office, Mendocino County Search & Rescue volunteers, South Coast Volunteer Fire Department and Redwood Coast Fire Department were searching on New Years Day for Kerry Ann Bonanno on her property. 34 people and 2 specially trained dogs went out and in a steep wooded ravine on the property, searchers found Bonanno deceased. There will be an autopsy to determine how she died and with a toxicology report, that could take several weeks.

Several more cases of coronavirus have been reported in Mendocino County. The Public Health Office reported 53 more cases between January 1st and 2nd, and three more deaths due to the virus. All three were over 65 years of age and all passed away at Adventist Health Ukiah Valley. The Public Health Office reported they were a 76 year old Hispanic man from Ukiah, a 68 year old White man from the North County and a 67 year old man whose ethnicity was just marked as other, he too was from the North County. Mendo Fever reports the three deaths came after the largest single day of positive results of cases, 71 on December 31st.

A woman who had a Black Lives Matter sign on her Laytonville property says it was stolen. Mendo Fever reports the owner of the Black Oak Ranch, Susy Barsotti, reported vandals used a chainsaw to cut down the sign and steal it on New Year's Eve. She says there's been ongoing vandalism of the sign since September when there was a robbery at a cannabis farm next door. She says someone changed her sign after to read Black Lies Matter instead, then someone splattered paint on the sign to hide the message. Which she fixed. Then last week the sign was taken.

A man from Sonoma County has died along with two kids after the three were swept off the beach by a sneaker wave. The Press Democrat reports the 40 year old man and his children, a 4 year old boy and 7 year old girl near Goat Rock died Sunday. The dad's body was found at Blind Beach by his wife, but the two children's bodies were not found. The family just moved to Petaluma recently. A ranger said he had heard the dad who had one of the children's hands, but lost grasp and jumped in after them. The day before a man from Southern California fell off the rocks below the Mendocino Headlands. He slipped while taking photos. His body was found in the water after about 45 minutes. There had been a high surf advisory on the coast over the weekend. On Friday waves hit up to 20 feet high.

An inmate at the Lake County Jail has been found dead in his cell. Daniel King of Clearlake was reportedly being seen for an advanced medical issue, but the Sheriff's office reported it was not COVID related. The death happened Saturday night after midnight. Some cellmates called for help before midnight after finding the man unresponsive. Medics reported to the jail and tried CPR on him, to no avail. He was declared dead there. His death was said to be unexpected and did not involve trauma. King had been at the jail since February of last year and was waiting to be transferred to a state prison for a four year term for a probation violation of a domestic violence charge. The death is being investigated by the DA's office since it happened at the jail and an autopsy will be conducted too.

Some funeral homes in Calif. are turning families away because they're overwhelmed with COVID cases. The head of the state funeral directors association says the funeral homes, like hospitals are being overrun. The Press Democrat reports one funeral home in Southern Calif. reports 30 body removals a day — six times more than usual. Some of the funeral home owners are calling each other to see who can take in the overflow, but there's been no luck. Some say they've had to rent refrigerators. And there are reports of delayed hospital pickups. The executive director of the California Funeral Directors Association says it's taking several days longer for cremations too. In before times it was a day or two, but now it could take up to a week or more.

The Mendocino County Sheriff has a presentation in front of the Board of Supervisors to get more money because of the mounting illegal marijuana grows and organized crime. Sheriff Matt Kendall is reportedly going to ask the board to hire ten more deputies as part of his power point presentation that he's titled, "Imminent Threat – Appropriate Response". There are a couple photos in the presentation, one with a trigger warning from some, a hogtied Black man, something 5th District Supervisor Ted Williams posted on Facebook it detracts from the otherwise relevant information. But the sheriff says residents tied the man up because he's understaffed, and that's when vigilante action takes over.

Police in Clearlake are looking for a man they say is connected to an attempted murder and assault on New Year's Day. Police say the man was still on the run, but they arrested the victim who was taken to a hospital out of the county, because they had a bunch of ammunition, a large capacity magazine and an AR15 rifle ghost gun. They're searching for 31 year old Jose Ceja-Torres for the felony violations of attempted murder and assault with a deadly weapon after reports of a gunshot victim. A man in his 40's was found wounded and flown to a hospital for treatment. Ceja-Torres' was identified as the shooter and was found to be wanted for being armed with a firearm while in possession of drugs and possession of marijuana for sale and felony evading a police officer. He is considered armed and dangerous.

The longest serving member on the Lake County Board of Supervisors is leaving. At the board meeting tomorrow, a fond farewell to Supervisor Rob Brown after 2 decades of service. He will speak at the meeting and he will receive a commendation for his 20 years. Then the oath of office will be administered to the District 1 Supervisor Moke Simon and District 4 Supervisor Tina Scott, and the newest member Supervisor Jessica Pyska, who won Brown's seat in November. Simon is the outgoing chair so he will preside over an election for that position and vice chair and a couple of board appointments will be made too. Later in the meeting the public health officer will give a coronavirus update.

In Lakeport, they'll start the first meeting of the new year discussing the pandemic. The meeting is online tomorrow night, the city council chambers remain closed to the public. A new Utilities Operator will be introduced and the city manager will talk about the city's continuing response to coronavirus. The City Manager Kevin Ingram had previously requested staffers work closely with the League of California Cities so rural areas can be represented for COVID-19 relief for local businesses and residents then bring what they find back to the council for more consideration. They will review if the city needs to respond differently after that request almost a month ago. The council will also be appointed to various boards, committees and commissions.

Mendocino County reports because state waivers are expiring for pressure-treated wood, it will now be classified as a hazardous material. Apparently the wood is sometimes required by state Building Code, but now residents will only be able to dispose of it with Mendo Recycle for a fee, but commercial customers may have more of an issue getting rid of it. The chemicals used on it protect it from bug infestations and decay. Used for such things as fence posts, railroad ties and in decks. Starting this New Year though the state is requiring the treated wood waste to be categorized as hazardous material (HazMat), which means it cannot be accepted anymore by waste haulers or at transfer stations in Mendocino County.

The Sonoma County Sheriff's Office says two missing children who went into the surf over the holiday weekend have not been found. The State Parks Dept. continues to search for the missing 4 year old boy and 6 year old girl at Blind Beach as deputies continue patrolling the coast. A helicopter was meant to go out looking yesterday, weather-permitting. The children's 40 year old dad, Michael Wyman's body was found by his wife after the three were swept into the surf. A dive team stopped searching because of dangerous surf. The Sheriff's Office reports receiving several 911 calls Sunday about the man and children who were pulled into the ocean at Blind

01/05/21 Beach.

Two new Mendocino County Supervisors have been sworn in. Glenn McGourty, representing the First District, and Maureen "Mo" Mulheren, representing the Second District ahead of this morning's meeting. Mendocino County CEO Carmel Angelo did the honors yesterday. The two new Supervisors were told, due to the pandemic, they would have to limit how many people came to the swearing in, which was not open to the public. McGourty was sworn in first, he says important issues, besides the pandemic, include cannabis, homelessness, fire and water issues. Supervisor Mulheren, a former Ukiah City Councilmember says the community is the most important priority and says she'll be big on social media so she can stay in touch with her constituents and encourage civic involvement and engagement.

A man who drowned under the Mendocino Headlands over the weekend has been identified. 45 year old David Reyes Juarez of Rancho Cucamonga was reportedly with his extended family on the coast Saturday. They say he climbed down the rugged coastline onto some rocks, then either fell or got swept off the rocks into the rough seawater. His family reportedly saw it happen, then a California State Parks lifeguard and others began searching for him or his body. He was found unconscious and plucked out of the water. CPR was administered, but he died on the scene.

A botched rollout of the new Moderna vaccine in Ukiah. A refrigerator containing over 800 doses of the coronavirus vaccine stopped working. And when staff at Ukiah Valley Medical Center found out about the issue, they started to rush to vaccinate hundreds of people during a three hour period, before the medicine expired. The medicine was already thawing over nine hours. The chief medical officer says it was an emergency situation to vaccinate community members, including the general public over medical workers or the elderly. A thawed, unpunctured vial is reportedly good for up to 12 hours between 46-77 degrees Fahrenheit after thawing for an hour at room temperature or for 2½ hours in a refrigerator. Apparently the refrigerator had a faulty compressor and an alarm set to go off if there's a malfunction also didn't work.

More deaths and hospitalizations from the virus than the state can handle as it also reaches almost 2.4 million cases since the pandemic began. As of Monday there were reports of almost 22,000 COVID-19 patients, and over 4,600 in intensive care units. The Department of Public Health reports so far 26,635 people have died. The state has a 12.5% positivity rate. It's getting more restrictive in LA County as the cases are skyrocketing. LA County health officials stopping restaurants from outdoor dining and asked Hollywood producers to put a hold on any TV or film production until the middle of the month.

The city of Clearlake is in discussions to sell a couple of city owned properties. One is a 29 acre property on Old Hwy 53 and the other for part of the Pearce Field airport property. They were discussed last month during a special city council meeting. The city manager says the Highway property was possibly going to be a housing development, but that's was on hold due to the recession of 2009. But a developer has a plan for homes there now. The city entered a 180-day exclusive negotiation agreement with a developer, the council voted unanimously to approve. And they voted to approve a letter of intent for the airport property purchase, that one's for a hotel potentially.

The first town hall of the new year for newly sworn-in long time Congressman Mike Thompson. This Thursday, Thompson's hosting his 17th virtual town hall going back to when the coronavirus pandemic first started. Like the others, you can see it on his Facebook page, and also email his office to join on Zoom. It goes from 7 to 8 p.m. This one is just a general topic with Q&A for constituents and members of the press. His 5th Congressional District seat covers all or part of Contra Costa, Lake, Napa, Solano and Sonoma counties.

The DA in Mendocino County says he's directing all of his deputy prosecutors to try to move any animal cruelty cases out of one judge's court. District Attorney David Eyster put out a statement yesterday, that effective immediately all deputy prosecutors should file preemptory challenge to disqualify and prevent Superior Court Judge Clayton Brennan to hear the cases and the DA wants them to further file challenges to get Brennan disqualified from hearing any case where a defendant is accused of personally using a firearm in the commission of a felony. It comes after the decision by Judge Brennan in the case of "Thunder the Wonder Dog" who survived a botched euthanasia shooting and lived, only to be abandoned in the woods. His former owner Katie Smith of Caspar got her felony animal cruelty conviction reduced to a misdemeanor and got no jail time. DA Eyster also says he's asking for an appellate review of Brennan's decision in the Smith case.

We could see that surge upon a surge upon a surge Dr. Anthony Fauci warned us about. The coronavirus case numbers have been down a couple days, but that's just because of the holiday and we probably won't see any major spike again for a week or so. The daily case numbers are plateauing, but the amount of positive tests has skyrocketed and the amount of people dying everyday is also on the rise. The state's been seeing an average of almost 36,000 new cases/day, but the positivity rate is higher than two weeks ago. An average of 335 people a day are dying, that's like one every four minutes. It was around that number per week in November, then the Thanksgiving holiday came, now Christmas, and New Year's. In Lake County, there have been almost 2,000 positive cases, and 24 deaths. In Mendocino County there have been 2,663 cases, that's 52 more the last two days, and another death was announced yesterday for a total of 31 deaths.

The new strain of COVID19 has spread into Calif. Last week we told you about one case of the B.1.1.7 variant that appears to have originated in the United Kingdom. It then showed up in Colorado, Florida and over 30 other countries. Last week it was found and reported in San Diego County, in a 30 year old man who had not traveled. Three more cases have now been reported in that county. Since the original case in the county had no travel history, public health officials say it shows it's now spreading in the community. Now there are 6 in the state, 4 in San Diego County and 2 in San Bernardino. Public health experts say the new variant spreads more rapidly, but does not appear to get those who are infected, sicker.

#### [New protocols are taking place at the Mendocino County Animal Shelter. The](#)

Federal guidelines say healthcare workers in direct contact with coronavirus patients should get the first crack at the vaccine. Now the federal Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices has recommended frontline essential workers and people over 75 to go next. Most states are following the guidelines, some are going rogue and choosing who to vaccinate first themselves. The Governor says we've received 70,000 first doses of the Pfizer vaccine which were given last week, with an expectation of another 560,000 last week too. And nearly 673,000 doses of the Moderna vaccine were supposed to come last week too. The next tier of workers may include education and childcare workers, first responders and food and agricultural workers.

A freezer malfunctioning at Adventist Health Ukiah turns vaccine favor to the Mendocino County Jail. There is an outbreak of coronavirus at the jail at the same time the freezer failed at the hospital and doses of the vaccine were about to go to waste. So the Sheriff's Office reports Monday their healthcare provider, NaphCare, administered some of the quickly thawing vaccines. About 800 doses were said to be in jeopardy of getting tainted. So Naphcare staff gave the vaccine in groups of ten at the jail at a quickly put together injection site. First they vaccinated Public Safety staff, including Sheriff's Deputies, Corrections Deputies and Public Safety Dispatchers, and essential Sheriff's Office staff. Then, employees from Public Health, and staff from other county departments who wanted the vaccine. Nearly 100 people got the shot at the use it or lose it event.

01/06/21

The public health office in Sonoma County says they've administered half of the coronavirus vaccine doses they received. The Press Democrat reports two weeks after the first shots were given, they don't have the data to know how many elderly residents and caregivers have received the first dose. The Governor's office reports only about a third of the available shots were administered so far, slower than anticipated. The Public Health Officer says they've given 7,445 doses so far of the two vaccines that gained emergency approval from the FDA, Pfizer and Moderna. The newspaper reports too that the county had 8 more deaths from the virus for a total of over 200 now. There were also another 132 cases of the virus. In Mendocino County there was another day of over 50 more cases, getting ever so close to 3,000 total.

A massive deal to join to wineries together is complete. The planned acquisition of E. & J. Gallo Winery from Constellation, an \$810 million deal, one of the largest ever in the U.S. wine industry. The Press Democrat reports it had been valued at \$1.7 billion back in April of 2019, but it was changed some as regulators forced a scaled back merger to preserve competition in the U.S. wine industry. Gallo's the biggest in the country but after selling to Constellation, it's now 5th. As part of the deal, Gallo will own the Clos du Bois winery in Geyserville, Ravenswood and Mark West wines.

The Governor has announced a new state stimulus program to help small businesses and unemployed Californians due to the pandemic. The \$4.5-billion stimulus program includes several grants and tax incentives, money for low-income residents so they can buy zero-emission vehicles and to pay for more charging and fueling stations across the state. The Gov. touting the state's economic innovation, inclusion and resilience. He says the new proposals will help Californians reach their dreams. He has to still get lawmakers to approve of his plan.

The coronavirus vaccine has been distributed at Sherwood Oaks Health Center. Adventist Health Mendocino Coast staff administered the shots between New Year's Eve and Monday to 58 staff members at Sherwood Oaks. The employees working for months on the front lines. The facility was reportedly the first to have an outbreak in Mendocino County. It happened last August, eight residents died of the virus. The Advocate newspaper reports those receiving and those giving the vaccine were grateful to be part of the vaccination program. The medical director for Sherwood said it was a relief and couldn't come at a better time.

New teachers in Lake County are starting the Teach Lake County Program. The Office of Education announced the fourth cohort of the program helping those who are qualified get their teaching credentials. Lake Co News reports it features a local perspective. The office of education says it provides an affordable way to become a teacher as well, for those already teaching as part of an internship. There are 21 people in the Preservice Program, the first step to get their credentials. It takes about six months to become an intern first. Due to the pandemic, they're holding classes online, two days a week.

Some new state laws have gone into effect, but less than most years, thanks to the pandemic. A new state law address that too, it requires companies doing business in the state. and the State Health Department — to report more COVID data. Cal Matters reports businesses will have to notify employees within 24 hours if there's been someone infected, which could have exposed them at work. They also have to report outbreaks, two or more positive cases which occur within a two week period. So Cal Osha will have more power over these incidents, as they're considered to be a workplace safety issue.

It's happened again, the seasonal flooding of the Navarro River. So that means SR-128, between SR-1 and Flynn Creek Rd., west of the town of Navarro is closed. It usually happens when the river overflows over a sandbar at its mouth. When its breached, the water tables there, then spills onto the highway which runs alongside the river over several miles until the river meets the ocean.

The state has issued a new order due to low ICU capacity, no non elective surgeries or procedures at hospitals. It applies to counties who have less than 10% ICU capacity and where there's 0 % regional capacity. It's happened in the San Joaquin Valley and Southern California regions. As we've been reporting, Los Angeles is getting inundated with cases, no room for patients, lower oxygen availability, means some rationing, and hours long waits to get patients into some hospitals. And in the San Joaquin Valley reports that ICUs are overflowing double their usual size, plus we've yet to see the whole picture of another surge from Christmas and New Year's gatherings and some travel, where some just arrived back home after a week or so away.

An oddity for Calif., tornadoes. In Northern Calif. reports of twisters this week. On Monday, a pair of them in Tehama County, northwest of Chico and south of Redding near I-5. The first one in Corning, a rural area, dotted with farms. They reported some downed trees, but no damage or injuries. One of the two twisters built up to 27,000 feet high. The National Weather Service issued the first tornado warning at 2:38 p.m. and a second tornado touched down at 2:40 p.m. Then there was a warning an hour later in Butte County, but no twister materialized.

A search has continued along the Sonoma Coast for two missing children swept from a rock with their father off Blind Beach. The father's body was found the same day by his wife, the mom of the missing children, 7 year old Anna and 4 year old John Wyman, lost Sunday. The State Parks Dept. reported rough ocean conditions at Blind Beach and Goat Rock. And it continued yesterday which held personnel back from being able to continue looking for the missing children. They consider it a recovery operation at this point. The waves have been reported to hit up to 20 feet last weekend and again yesterday. Rangers were along the shore looking as lifeguards also drove around the edges of Salmon Creek beach. The Monte Rio Fire Chief and a lifeguard were on the beach walking to Jenner then about a mile south from Blind Beach, apparently finding some children's clothing which may or may not be related.

The state has set aside over \$40 million for those who've lost their jobs due to the pandemic, but now it turns out may have go to out of state jail and prison inmates. The Employment Development Department reportedly lost hundreds of millions of dollars in COVID-19 unemployment funds to fraud, including some in Sen. Dianne Feinstein's name. A report last month showed the unemployment money was approved for those incarcerated out of state including as many as 2,000 in Florida. In one instance, a man in prison for murder got nearly \$11,000 in payments from California.

New information has been gathered about a man from Rancho Cucamonga who died after a fall or being swept by a wave by the Mendocino Big River Headlands State Park. 45-year-old David Reyes Juarez, a teacher was visiting on Saturday, but died after falling into the ocean. Juarez identified as a teacher in the San Bernardino Union School District who was described as positive and upbeat. His loss was described as monumental. The Mendocino Volunteer Fire Department said they got a call for the rescue and Juarez was found 45 minutes later. He was brought to the shore and CPR was administered for 20 minutes, but he was pronounced dead.

California officials are telling people they should stay home and not leave for non-essential travel outside an area within 120 miles from home. They've instituted a quarantine too, anyone coming or going needs to self-quarantine for a week and a half. California is considered the hottest spot in the country. But all of the recommendations are not mandatory and local officials can have stricter rules if warranted.

01/07/21

The Governor of California has a new school reopening plan, but superintendents of seven of the state's biggest school districts don't like it. A letter sent to Gov. Gavin Newsom says the plan doesn't help low income communities of color or promote a way to slow the spread of the virus. The Governor announced spending \$450/student for in-person learning which the superintendents say they fear would help wealthier communities and punish poorer ones. The "Safe Schools for All" plan was announced last month. It looks to spend \$2 billion on schools to reopen next month as the virus continues spreading like wildfire across the state.

A shooting reported in Ukiah. Mendo Fever reports hearing the report on the scanner last night around 9:21 p.m. It happened at the Sunrise Inn on South State Street. Someone reportedly shot out a window then ran off. They have identified the suspected shooter as Phillip Lopez who was described as a Latino man, 5' 9", 180 lbs. with tattoos on his face wearing a black hoodie and blue jeans. Later in the night police put out a "be on the lookout" for Phillip Ronnie Lopez Junior, who they say is "armed and dangerous." They say he was suspected of shooting into an occupied vehicle and is believed to have been connected to a Black Cadillac CTS sedan.

Three North Coast members of Congress have spoken publicly about their experience during the insurrection at the US Capitol. Congressman Jared Huffman of San Rafael, Congressman Mike Thompson of St. Helena, and Congressman John Garamendi of Walnut Grove. Garamendi says yesterday will go down as the saddest day in American History. Huffman says he couldn't have imagined anything like this. Thompson's building was the first to be evacuated, the Cannon Building. He says there had been anxiety about the day, because they were counting the electoral college votes and certifying Biden and Harris' wins. He says President Trump encouraged his rally goers, earlier in the day, to be violent. Supporters stormed the capitol, broke inside and went onto the floor of the house, senate and rampaged thru offices before eventually being forced out by police. Huffman called it sedition.



The Gov. canceled a planned press conference on the pandemic because of the goings on at the capitol. The Governor's office said it was out of "an abundance of caution" after pro-Trump protesters had also gathered outside the state Capitol. At the same time there were violent rioters at the US Capitol, there to overturn the presidential election results, the Vice President was presiding over. Members of Congress had to either evacuate, shelter in place and some had on gas masks. Gov. Newsom said it was an assault to democracy and Democratic institutions and called on President Trump to "move immediately to a peaceful transition of power."

Hundreds of thousands of unemployment claims are on hold as the state's grappling with massive fraud in the coronavirus unemployment relief program. They first said they were going to freeze high risk claims, but yesterday the state Employment Development Department said they were looking over existing claims from those who said they were without a job due to the pandemic. The state also claims the unemployment dept. found as many as 3.5 million potentially fraudulent claims. Almost 2 million were already disqualified with payments held back for the 1.4 million they are still trying to verify.

The Governor says he wants to add onto the federal stimulus some Californians just received for \$600 with another \$600. The Gov. Gavin Newsom announced the proposal yesterday for people who make less than \$30,000 a year, including people living in the US illegally who file taxes with the state. That means about 4 million people could be eligible at a cost to the state of \$2.4 billion. He says he's also going to the Legislature to get permission to extend a moratorium on evictions as well. The budget usually passes in the summertime, but the Governor will ask lawmakers to do it sooner to get more relief to Californians suffering because of the pandemic.

The Lake County Board of Supervisors is closing its chambers due to the amount of positive coronavirus cases. The board meetings will continue to be Zoom'd to the public. 2 members voted against the idea, newly minted Board Chair Bruno Sabatier and Supervisor Tina Scott. The idea brought up by former Board Chair, Supervisor Moke Simon as the county continues to grapple with cases and deaths. He said they could take up the matter each week. But Sabatier said he was comfortable coming to the courthouse, which is also currently closed to the public, and the board chambers, saying anything we do, comes with risk. The board also approved new COVID-19 Worksite Protocols, an extension of something passed back in May and gets a review every month.

Some state lawmakers commenting on the uprising at the US Capitol. State Senator Mike McGuire said it was a terrorist act that was stoked by the President, adding that "all Americans should be horrified and angered by these seditious acts". State Sen. Bill Dodd said the chaos was an "unprecedented attack on American values, our representatives and our fair election process". The Governor canceled a coronavirus press conference because protestors gathered at the state Capitol. He said after, "we are concerned for the safety of California's congressional delegation and U.S. Capitol staff, and are reaching out to offer support in every way possible" then called on the president to end the situation and acknowledge the will of the people and for a peaceful transfer of power. The insurgency into the Capitol and on the House and Senate floors yesterday during the counting of the electoral college votes and finally certification early this morning.

An update on the pandemic for Lakeport. The City Council heard from city staff and directed them to continue their efforts to educate and enforce restrictions. The council talked about current response efforts, something the city manager said they were constantly reviewing and making changes to. As of yesterday, the county had over 2,000 positive cases since the beginning of the pandemic, including 25 deaths. The city working with the county's public health office regarding restrictions, testing and other protocols. The city manager told the council he's hopeful about the vaccine as there is an unprecedented surge in new cases.

Business owners trying to get onto the state's portal to apply for one of the many grants for those affected by the pandemic say it's a nightmare. The website for businesses to navigate requires several documents to be uploaded but apparently there have been technical issues. So the state's lending partner had to extend the deadline 5 days so those having problems could get thru the site which had a lot of traffic, thousands of applicants. And some applicants couldn't make their way thru the site due to the amount of visitors at one time. The grant program in November distributing money from \$5,000 to \$25,000, depending on the business's size.

No more delivery drivers for one Grocery Store company who says instead they're going to utilize third party companies. Albertsons, the owner of Safeway, Vons and other stores is going to use Door Dash starting next month. A representative of the company says it will help them grow home delivery. They say they're working to help the employees affected by the move, those who stay thru the transition will earn bonuses. The president of the United Food and Commercial Workers International union says it's an exploitation of Prop. 22 which permits side hustle companies like Door Dash and Uber to classify drivers and others as independent contractors so they don't get full-time employee benefits.

The amount of people dying from the virus in Sonoma County is skyrocketing again. The Press Democrat reports the first week of the new year brought over 20 more deaths from the pandemic. County health officials say ten of the 22 were reported yesterday, and 8 on Tuesday. But ten is the most the county has had in one day so far. The Sheriff's office has a new refrigeration for as many as 56 bodies at one time if the morgue reaches its limit. Health experts say we're still not into the travel and holiday portion of an expected surge in cases again. The county's Public Health Officer, Dr. Sundari Mase says the rise in deaths and hospitalizations shows it remains widespread in the county and that it's important to follow public health orders and personal safety rules, including masking, hand-washing and social distancing.

01/08/21

Two of the North Coast congressional members are speaking out about the President and his connection to the insurrection at the US Capitol on Wednesday. Congressmen Jared Huffman and Mike Thompson say the President needs to be removed from office. First House Speaker Nancy Pelosi announced they were trying to convince the Vice President to invoke the 25th amendment. But Thompson and Huffman say they will support articles of impeachment which were widely being circulated yesterday online and in the halls of Congress. House speaker Pelosi blamed Mr. Trump for inciting an armed insurrection against America after his supporters descended on the Capitol wreaking havoc. 5 people died.

A small airplane had to make an abrupt landing near Lake Sonoma that sent out a search party. Nobody was injured in the impromptu landing yesterday in northwestern Sonoma County. The CHP got a report of a downed plane around 4-30 near Dry Creek Road and Stewarts Point Skaggs Springs Road, northwest of Healdsburg. That triggered Sonoma County Sheriff's deputies, a CHP helicopter and firefighters from Cloverdale, Dry Creek Rancheria and Northern Sonoma County to report to the area. The plane was found on a sandbar. The Northern Sonoma County Fire Chief said thankfully the water was low so the area was flat enough for the pilot, who was alone on the plane, to land. The pilot had left and walked to a nearby home and the plane was not damaged.

No in person driving tests are being allowed right now by the DMV due to the pandemic. The Department of Motor Vehicles announced all in person tests are postponed until at least Feb. 1st due to the continued rise in COVID-19 cases. So anyone with an appointment will be notified their appointment is being rescheduled. It includes commercial and noncommercial licenses, but because motorcycle tests can still be done at a distance, they will continue. Those who have to wait and have expired licenses or permits will get an automatic extension for six more months of expiration, or 24 months from the date of an application, whichever comes first. Commercial driver licenses are only extended until the end of Feb.

New coronavirus vaccine recommendations have been sent out to local public health departments and healthcare providers. The recommendations show the new tiered groupings of who should get the vaccine by priority. But health departments and providers can also offer shots to lower priority groups after the high-priority demand lessens or doses may expire. As of yesterday there had been over 586,000 doses administered and over 2 million doses sent out to local health departments. Those include first and second doses. The Governor announced too that continued safety measures are needed to get through the current surge, which includes distributing the vaccine in an equitable way. The Governor says the goal is to administer a million vaccinations over the next 10 days.

50 more cases of coronavirus have been confirmed in Mendocino County. The county's public health department also announced free testing in Willits this morning from 8:30-10:30 at the Willits Senior Center. Also this afternoon in Covelo. Check the Public Health Dept. Facebook page for more info.

State Sen. Mike McGuire has put forth a bill for local small businesses struggling due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. The bill would roll back a Trump administration tax for limited liability companies and partnerships and "S" corporations. It would give these companies the option to pay the yearly tax based on net income for the prior year, which McGuire says would give money back to the companies dealing with the ongoing crisis. McGuire blames the Trump administration for instituting the tax in certain states which hurt middle-class families and small businesses across Calif. The bill would roll back the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act signed into law in 2018. His bill will allow a deduction of state and local taxes from federal taxes.

A lawmaker from San Francisco says he's drafted a bill to make it easier for the elderly or those with disabilities to apply for food stamps, known in Calif. as CalFresh. They could potentially do the whole process on the phone, if his bill passes. He announced the bill this week, noting the state's food insecurity crisis is worse than ever. Sen. Scott Wiener's bill would streamline the process which includes lots of long questions, putting forth evidence of need and then having an interview. Right now less than half of the counties in the state allow the phone in process. Over 4 million people are reportedly enrolled in Cal Fresh currently.

The workload of nurses in Calif has skyrocketed during the pandemic. Nurses were only allowed to have a certain amount of patients at one time, but that's out the window due to the amount of cases the state's dealing with. Before this the state was the only one in the country required by law to have a specific nurse to patient ratio, one nurse to two patients in ICU and one for four in emergency rooms. The Gov. and state Department of Public Health are handing out temporary waivers though due to a lack of staffing at some hospitals. It happened in the spring too for 90 says, the latest for 60 days at at least 250 of the state's 400 hospitals.

Those who have to have debris taken from their homes after the summer's wildfires, there's a free program. The state's Consolidated Debris Removal Program is free, but property owners need to opt in to it and fill out some paperwork to allow workers onto their property. The program put on by the Governor's Office of Emergency Services, CalRecycle, and local governments. Those with fire damage or destruction or if they have trees that could fall onto public roads or buildings from last summer's fires have until the beginning of February to sign up for the free program. It includes removal of hazardous household materials and contaminated debris.

Huge waves reported at the Noyo Harbor entrance. The Coast Guard's station Chief Petty Officer reported waves up to 20 feet high, and called it a "bar closure". That means no military or civilian vessels can pass thru the area. There were high tides with about 8.5 foot tidal change and a long period of swells. He also had a warning, don't turn your back on the ocean, stay back away from beaches or bluffs and check the weather forecast. Anyone onboard a ship should check the weather, have access to life jackets, and have a marine VHF radio in case of emergencies. Kym Kemp is asking anyone who may have pictures of yesterday's waves to share them.

01/11/21 You can upload them onto the suite.

The Lake County Sheriff's office reports several overdoses last week. Last Thursday several people took pills apparently sold to people as if it were the drug Ecstasy/MDMA. One person died after taking one of the pills, two people ended up in the hospital and another had to have two doses of Narcan to be revived. The Sheriff's office reports seeing social media posts and pictures of the unknown looking pills, but said they were unable to verify if they were connected to the incident. They are investigating the pills in the pictures and any possible connection to the overdoses, plus the person who died will have an autopsy and they will have to wait several days for toxicology results. One of the calls from Upper Lake Thursday, the Narcan administered at the Big Valley Rancheria.

A couple of people in Covelo had to be medevacked to the hospital after possible dog bites. It was transmitted over the scanner, one woman lost a finger and a man had an abrasion on his arm, losing skin. The two were treated for shock and taken by air ambulance to the hospital. Covelo Fire and Cal Fire were reportedly involved in caring for the two on Saturday. Two kids reported as absent from school leads to the arrest of their parents who were nowhere to be found... now arrested. Ukiah police say they got a call Friday night, just before 11 to check on the kids, 3 and 7 years old. They went to a home and found the kids alone. Parents Stephanie Phillips and Sean Finnegan in bed and could not be awakened. Police went inside, fearing a medical emergency and found the pair in bed, the dad, with a pipe in his hand. Cops found suspected heroin nearby along with multiple Xanax pills around the bedroom, where the kids could get them. The parents ended up getting arrested for leaving the kids unsupervised, and drug possession and other crimes. The mom was also on probation. The children were taken by child protective services and brought to other family members.

Calif. continues to deal with a seemingly unstoppable surge of COVID-19 cases. 695 deaths reported Saturday alone and 468 yesterday. Nearly 30,000 deaths so far from the pandemic. The cases have surged without a flattening of the curve since Halloween, then record hospitalizations around Thanksgiving time. Hospitals across the state are struggling and many are even over capacity. In Los Angeles, there's talk of rationing care because there are barely an ICU beds available. The post-Christmas surge is upon us. On Thursday and Friday in Los Angeles County, there were almost 20,000 cases a day. The county's Public Health chief science officer says hospitalizations and deaths will continue to stay high due to gatherings and travel over the holidays. Los Angeles County has around 40% of the state's COVID-19 deaths.

The Governor says he's putting aside \$15 billion in economic relief due to the pandemic. It's part of a larger, \$227 billion proposal that has to be approved by lawmakers. He also asked for \$5 billion in "emergency funding" to tackle five areas, reopening schools, boost coronavirus vaccine spending, small business grants and fee waivers and \$600 direct payments to around 4 million people. The money all from tax revenues the state got during the pandemic. Newsom says the state is continuing to be challenged. His office says they're putting the most money ever into schools, \$90 billion. The budget has been adjusted as there was an expectation of much higher losses due to the pandemic, but apparently the expected shortfall didn't occur, so the state has more money to spend than anticipated.

No to a water rate increase in Clearlake. Last week the city council said it would oppose the 23% rate hike proposed by the Golden State Water Company over the next three years. The company is allowed to raise rates every three years. This proposal would mean nearly 15% more next year, then another 8% by the year 2024. The council has asked city staff to draft a letter for the California Public Utility Commission voicing their opposition. For their part the Golden State Water Company had a representative on the Zoom meeting and said the company hoped the council would have supported the rate increase. The Board Chair Bruno Sabatier called out the company and said the city's poverty rate was 33% so the company instead should apply for grant funding for their needs.

Some school districts in Calif. being challenged by the needs to update ventilation systems in order to reopen to in person learning in the midst of the ongoing pandemic. The state Assembly has introduced a bill for money to be made available for schools to upgrade their HVAC systems. Teachers unions and state leaders are asking schools to find ways to improve indoor air quality with newer filtration systems or air purifiers, or completely replacing outdated heating, cooling and air ventilation (HVAC) systems. The Governor's plan to reopen schools calls for testing, contact tracing, masks, and ventilation upgrades.

There could be up to 900 vaccine shots a week given in Mendocino County. At least that's the hope from the county's Public Health Officer Dr. Andy Coren. During his Friday media availability Coren said the vaccination plan was supposed to be slow to begin with, then ramp up. He says there will be a mass vaccination clinic up to 3 days/week. Nearly 300 were given their first dose on Thursday last week. He says the short term goal is 900 people/week, which will steadily increase number as more doses arrive. So far the county has received about 2,450 doses to date. The last shipment of 975 Pfizer doses were for the second shot. But the county was expecting more doses which will be updated on the public health department's website as they arrive. Dr. Coren says the county has 31% ICU capacity at the moment. He also noted a recent outbreak at the Safeway in Willits and of course a major one at the Mendocino County Jail where 94 cases emerged.

A working group of experts on the vaccine has announced who will be next in line for the coronavirus vaccine as doctors across the state say they've been forgotten. But a new updated tiered based approach should have health providers getting vaccinated. People over 64 years old, teachers, childcare workers, food industry and agriculture workers and non-medical first responders are in the next group along with prisoners, the homeless and those in essential transportation, manufacturing and construction workers at risk of exposure. Then one last priority group, those over 49 years old, people ages 16 to 64 with chronic conditions or disabilities, and essential workers in the water, defense, energy communications, financial and government sectors.

The Mendocino County Public Health Officer says they're aiming to vaccinate 900 residents a week. In his weekly address, the first since the holidays, Dr. Andrew Coren gave an overview of where we're at with the pandemic. First off, we have had a couple of outbreaks recently. The jail, where there were nearly 100 cases of the virus in inmates and staff. Also 5 cases in a micro cluster at the Safeway in Willits and at Mayacama Industries. Coren says the daily case rate is around 32 individuals per 100,000 residents. And we're gaining on 3,000 positive cases so far and 2914 and 31 deaths. 332 are in isolation and 13 people are in the hospital, including one in an ICU. 28 new cases were confirmed yesterday. The county has 31% available ICU beds. The trigger for economic lockdown is 15%. There is a new travel advisory across Calif, a warning not to go outside a 120 mile radius from your home and avoid travel to or from other states or countries.

Calif. had its deadliest weekend so far due to the pandemic. Cases continue skyrocketing, especially in Los Angeles County. There have now been over 30,000 deaths since the pandemic started last year. It took 6 months for the first 10,000 deaths, and less than a month to go from 20,000 to 30,000 deaths in Calif. Calif. is ranked third for the most deaths, behind Texas and New York which has had about 40,000, most of which happened at the very beginning of the pandemic. Calif. officials reported a 2 day record of deaths this weekend, 1,163. There are also way more hospitalizations too. Still health officials have a warning for Calif. residents, the worst is yet to come. The hotspots in the state are in 15 counties in Southern California and in the San Joaquin Valley. This is where many are listed as lower-income residents who could also be living in congregate situations or work at places where they must be in close contact with customers or other employees.

A couple of men accused of pulling a weapon at Big River beach along the coast. The Calif. State Parks Chief says on Sunday a man pulled a single head ax on another man. Someone called and told a Fish and Wildlife Warden there had been in an argument with another man who had threatened him with a rifle. But upon investigating, they found it was an ax. The two men were separated, and the victim said they wouldn't be pressing charges.

01/12/21

More doses of the coronavirus vaccine have reportedly arrived in Mendocino County. The county reports there will be several vaccination clinics held to distribute 1,400 first doses and 400 second doses of the Moderna vaccine. They have also received 300 first doses and 675 second doses of the Pfizer vaccine. So that means there will be six vaccination events this week. Members of the general public won't be able to get vaccinations until late Spring or early Summer, but county staff will have more weekly clinics as more doses arrive. This week three vaccination clinics in Ukiah. Fire fighters, criminal justice personnel, law enforcement and crisis counselors, and 2nd doses for those who were already vaccinated. In-Home Supportive Service workers, food service workers and protective service workers, and more second Pfizer doses in the Ukiah Conference Center Thursday and Friday, back to the Fairgrounds for education and childcare providers and agricultural workers. Then on the coast in Fort Bragg there are two vaccination clinics for fire and EMS personnel Thursday and Friday.

The Dungeness Crab season has begun again in Bodega Bay. The fishing fleet dropped baited crab pots Sunday for the much delayed beginning of the harvest for Dungeness crab. Crabbers can start to haul pots out starting Wednesday. That's about two months after the traditional Nov. 15th start to the season. The season was put off over a month as a protection for migrating whales in the fishing grounds. But commercial crabbers and wholesale buyers were then at loggerheads about how much to charge this season before they finally settled after two weeks of negotiations that ended last Friday.

Updated evacuation plans have been revealed to the Fort Bragg City Council. The City Manager with the presentation in the case of an emergency. The city manager also reminded anyone taking part in their last virtual meeting, the water and wastewater rate increase went into effect on New Year's Day. The council discussed the winter shelter for which they approved more money for since there were no offers to hold the shelter due to the pandemic. That happened last month. Right now the shelter is at Trinity Lutheran Church, where they're hosting about eight people every night. Next month a new location must be found. At another meeting Jan. 21st they should consider the next venue.

Teachers and other school employees will start getting the coronavirus vaccine in Calif. The first in Mariposa County. Up to 1.4 million teachers and other school staff are expected to get the vaccination, starting yesterday.

State officials were telling health care providers to get their staff members vaccinated so that the state could move to the next tier group which includes child care workers, elementary and secondary school personnel and community college, university and trade school staff members. The Governor reportedly wanted teachers up in the higher tiers who get access to the vaccine so that schools can reopen sooner, rather than later as part of his "Safe Schools for All" plan.

The former public health officer for the county has been acting as the deputy to Officer Andy Coren. The Board of Supervisors, except for one new member, has voted to keep Dr. Noemi Doohan on another year with Coren. But newly seated 2nd District Supervisor Maureen Mulheren voted against the \$100,000 payment to keep Doohan on as Deputy Public Health Officer through the end of 2021. It had been noted previously that Doohan would not be needed this far into 2021. The county CEO says Doohan's getting paid for 15 hours a week, but is actually putting in at least 30 hours a week. Supervisor Mulheren questioned the amount of money saying perhaps it's better spent on one or two positions involved in vaccine distribution. But other supervisors said they believed Dr. Coren thought he still needed the support. So the contract was approved.

The Governor says he's fine with the President being removed from office through impeachment or the 25th Amendment. During one of his press conferences, he was asked his thoughts on the subject and answered, "I'm all for it" then quickly changed the subject. He said though, that right now he's focused on the pandemic and vaccinating as many residents as possible. At the same time the state Assembly has also passed a resolution calling for the President to resign or be removed. Independent Assemblyman Chad Mayes, a former Republican leader who switched parties last year, introduced the resolution saying reconciliation and healing can come after "accountability and repentance." The vote was 51-6, all of the dissenting votes were Republicans.

There's no room at Hope Center, the new homeless facility in Lake County. Lake Co News reports Hope Rising's executive director was at the Clearlake City Council meeting last week. She said the 20 bed center is full with 20 occupants and more on a waiting list. The center was built with \$4.6 million in state and local grants. They've made major renovations to the old medical office and are just finishing up the kitchen because some needed items were on backorder. Of the people living at the Center, two people are from Kelseyville, two from Lakeport, one each from Lower Lake, Spring Valley and Middletown, two from Mendocino County, another who just came to Lake County from Washington and two apparently don't have a city they consider home. They have had 3 people who were there already leave.

Lake County Supervisors considering a property swap for an affordable housing project. They'll also discuss the controversial dissent against a water rate increase and hear from the county's Public Health Officer on the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. The meeting this morning online only due to the pandemic and an agreement to close the council chambers. Written comments are being accepted on the agenda. The county property swap regarding the Lakeport Armory which is excess state-owned property and county-owned, undeveloped property on 18th Avenue in Clearlake. The rate increase for Golden State Water District is being discussed along with sending a letter to the Public Utilities Commission opposing it.

The Bay Area has low ICU capacity in light of the surge of COVID19 cases across Calif. The Lake County Health Dept. reported there's less than 10% ICU capacity, and both county hospitals are typically at capacity these days. As of yesterday Lake County was reporting 12 people in the hospital, 246 active cases and two more people had died since last week for a total of 27 deaths and nearly 2,200 confirmed cases of the virus. As of Sunday the county had 35% ICU capacity. Dr. Gary Pace reports it's important to lower the risk, by staying home as much as possible, go shopping early in the morning or late in the evening to lower your risk of contracting the virus, work at home if possible, and to avoid socializing with people outside your immediate household. He says if people would follow those guidelines, the surge would start to go down by the end of January.



The 1st and 2nd doses of the Pfizer Vaccine for 975 residents have arrived in Lake County. There are also 900 doses of the Moderna vaccine. And 500 more thru community healthcare partners. The Public Health Officer, Dr. Gary Pace says they have no idea what the supply schedule but continue to set up clinics and outreach to healthcare providers. Residents 75 and older and some essential workers are eligible next week. Then teachers and school staff with in person students are going to be prioritized so more schools can open. Then childcare workers and essential workers in food and agriculture.

[A new report says there has been a surge in suicides in Mendocino County si](#)

A new report says it was wildfire smoke which caused as much as half of all health-damaging small particle air pollution in the western U.S. The report by researchers at both Stanford and UC San Diego says air pollution was down from things like car exhaust and power plants, but there were so many fires, that attributed to health concerns. The report says wildfires due to climate change were a growing public health threat. Wildfires, the researchers say, should be top of mind, as we don't really see sea level rise, or hurricanes that much, but we do see wildfire smoke from climate change. Researchers looked at data from 2016-18, not even last summer, when Calif. at least, had some of the biggest fires we've ever seen. The August Complex for instance was the first one million acre, or giga fire we ever had.

Money available thru the Lake County Continuum of Care to help those at risk of losing shelter. The group has received California Emergency Solutions and Housing (CESH) grant funding for the most needy in the county. The money distributed has to be in alignment with certain state policies, and it has to be to help those without shelter into permanent housing and help them maintain permanent housing. The money available is over \$415,000 and has to be split between two recipients for outreach on the street, health and safety education, criminal justice diversion programs, prevention services, navigation services, and operating support for short-term or comprehensive homeless services. The money can also go to rent help or to subsidies like housing vouchers, rapid rehousing programs,

01/13/21 eviction prevention, and housing relocation.

[For more information and how apply, please go to: https://www.lakecoc.org/c](https://www.lakecoc.org/c)

[The shellfish safety notice has been lifted by the state Dept. of Public Health |](#)

Covered Calif. reports over 1.5 million people have purchased health insurance, that's 200,000 more than a year ago. The deadline is January 31st to buy insurance. The Executive Director of Covered Calif. says he anticipates more people than ever will sign up as people have lost their jobs. The insurance marketplace had dried up some over the last 3 years, then when the pandemic hit enrollment went way up. There was also a new state law that started where the state was taxing people without insurance but the state put up millions to help middle income residents pay for their insurance. The county has received over 2,700 doses of the Covid-19 vaccine this week. Mendocino County officials say there are continued vaccination events this week including first and second shots for those in priority groups. As we reported yesterday three clinics are happening in Ukiah at the Redwood Empire Fairgrounds this week, it will include first responders, criminal justice personnel and crisis counselors and second doses for healthcare workers. Teachers, childcare workers, in home support workers, food service and agriculture workers on next. The county has put together a new Mendocino Ethics Covid Ad Hoc Committee working with the Public Health Office to decide on distribution and transparency.

There's a new permanent president for Adventist Health in Mendocino County. It was made effective Dec. 18th that Judson Howe is taking the helm for the three Adventist Health hospitals in Fort Bragg, Ukiah and Willits, plus he's overseeing some medical offices and other services in the county. The CEO of Adventist says Howe's a dynamic leader who has a passion for quality, innovation and excellence with expertise and knowledge of the community and their hospitals. Howe's already been working for the company as their finance and strategy officer. Before that he was the head of finance and strategy for Adventist Health Howard Memorial.

A new report says Latinos turned out to vote this past election because of the way the President spoke about their community. Voter registration was up dramatically for Latino voters in Calif, which some voter registration advocates say was because of the political climate in the Trump era. The non-partisan social justice group Riverside for Mi Familia Vota said the president's "rhetoric against immigrant communities" backfired, and did not get younger voters out to register to vote. The group says instead the community's voter registration was boosted by competitive elections, mobilization by political parties and activists, and perhaps automatic motor voter registration.

Lake County's putting up more affordable housing after a vote by the Board of Supervisors to sell county land. The board voted yesterday to approve the exchange of the National Guard Armory with state owned property in Clearlake for 100 new affordable housing units. Lake Co News reports State Sen. Mike McGuire was involved in discussions on the project. For the swap the state requires at least half of the units being built are categorized as affordable, including 12.5 percent being very low, 12.5 percent – low, and 25 percent – moderate. The units will be between one and three bedrooms. The vote for the exchange was unanimous.

Congressman Mike Thompson continues his series of virtual meetings on coronavirus. This Friday the meeting's topic on relief for small businesses. It's around lunchtime, from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and will be on Zoom and stream live on the Congressman's Facebook page. His office is inviting all constituents in the 5th District to take part. It's the 2nd webinar Thompson has held since the 2nd stimulus package was approved.

MacGruder Ranch is providing beef to those dealing with food insecurity in Mendocino County. The ranch in Potter Valley raises organic beef, lamb and pork. MendoLake Food Hub had been in touch with the ranch with grant money so they could buy ground beef for the senior center in Fort Bragg. There was also a match from MacGruder with what the Food Hub had in grant money for a donation of 75 pounds of for a total of 150 pounds. Plus the Daily Journal reports the ranch also donated another \$500 to the Food Bank in Ukiah. The ranch has been providing meet to the Ukiah Natural Foods Co-op and Harvest Market in Fort Bragg, butcher shops and restaurants here locally and in the Bay Area.

The Community Foundation in Mendocino County has grant money for nonprofits dealing with the ongoing impact of the coronavirus pandemic. Grants of up to \$100,000, depending on various criteria, are available. They are taking into consideration the nonprofits can prove they have less funding, and more demand for their services due to the pandemic; have a plan to reopen, following public health guidance; are of benefit to the general public or a broad sub-population; have the energy and organizational capacity to adapt and continue to have a sustainable, longterm influence in the community. The deadline to apply is Jan. 15.

The Ukiah Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan is in the midst of being reworked. Walk & Bike Mendocino, a partnership of North Coast Opportunities, and the City of Ukiah are working on the update and welcome community input. The plan helps the city work on bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, like where to have bike routes and lanes, crosswalks and close sidewalk gaps. The last plan was 5 and a half years ago. They hope to wrap up the update by this Spring.

For those interested in participating with this advisory group, please respond by calling Walk & Bike Mendocino at (707) 467-3217 or email [walkbike@ncoinc.org](mailto:walkbike@ncoinc.org).

The next tier of vaccine recipients teeing up in Lake County. The Public Health Officer Dr. Gary Pace says the next group are those over 75 and educators. The county has reportedly offered the vaccine to the first tier of healthcare workers, emergency responders and residents and staff of long-term care facilities. But the slow rollout of the vaccine across the country means we may not see everyone in Lake County vaccinated until the end of 2022. Pace says about 25,000-30,000 people in the county want the vaccine, but the county was only getting 300-400 doses a week through the health department.

The homeless shelter in Fort Bragg may continue in its current space.

Trinity Lutheran Church offered its space for a shelter towards the latter part of last year. The city took the church up on that, so they started to offer shelter to those without on New Year's Day. They say there have been about eight guests/night. The church has offered to run the shelter thru mid-February, giving the city some time to find a new location after that, but now Trinity says they might be able to continue for another month, so the city would just need to get a space for the last 2 weeks of March. Mendo Voice reports last year the shelter continued beyond March. Hospitality Center puts the shelter together each year, an overflow situation from the year round Hospitality House facility. The Mayor telling the council Monday he had visited the church and the Pastor said they might be able to go thru March 15th. So there will be a meeting on the matter next Tuesday.

As the county announced there were several hundred doses of the coronavirus vaccine and six clinics this week, there has been confusion about who goes next. The county announced first and second doses, the seconds for those in the first tier who got their shots in December. There are still many more folks in the first tier of 1a and 1b who get to get their shots. Since the county announced the Redwood Empire Fairgrounds would be the site in Ukiah, there was a big line-up of folks there to get the shot this morning. In misty, cold weather, some in the over 75 group showed up, saying they had received a call from either their doctor's office or the county Public Health Office. I called the Public Health Office and was told they were making calls to residents over 75 and telling them they could get the first shot at the Fairgrounds on a first come, first serve basis. One of our team members showed up after getting one of the calls, only to turn away after seeing hundreds lined up in the rain.

A hospital in Northern California has been fined thousands of dollars for not reporting a recent outbreak where an employee ended up dying. Kaiser Permanente San Jose Medical Center fined \$43,000 January 5 for "failure to timely report 43 cases involving personnel who tested positive between December 27, 2020 and January 1, 2021." Local reports say the amount of cases has grown to over 90 now. That included 77 members of Kaiser's staff along with 15 patients. Santa Clara County came with the fine citing to CNN that the hospital needs to be "responsible for complying with all applicable public health orders and work safety regulations, including timely reporting of cases and all required follow-ups". Apparently public health

01/14/21 officials are still investigating how the outbreak started.

If you've received a call from Public Health that you can go to the Redwood Empire Fairgrounds to get your vaccination for coronavirus, you're out of luck. Late yesterday the County sent out a statement that it was a "roaring success", so much that they have no more shots to give out this week. The Public Health Office was calling people over 75 to come get their first shot. They filed into a line outside in cold, misty weather, only to leave or be turned away. The County said later the vaccination clinics for this week were FULL and they're not accepting any more recipients. The clinics, they said, are for qualified groups based on State guidelines and are not public vaccination clinics. Any other information on upcoming vaccination events are going to be posted on the county's website and social media pages.

Three Northern Calif. Congressmembers have voted to impeach Donald Trump. Lake Co News reports Congressmen Mike Thompson and John Garamendi voted yay to impeach yesterday. Jared Huffman indicated just before the vote, that he too would be a yes. There was only one Article of Impeachment, Inciting an Insurrection. It was related to the siege at the US Capitol last Wednesday, January 6th. This is the first time in history a President has been impeached two times. The first impeachment for the president came one year ago for abuse of power and obstruction of Congress related to a call the president had with the president of Ukraine. Trump is the third president to be impeached.

The Sheriff's Office reports arresting a man for evading a peace officer and reckless driving. Apparently Marcelino Anguiano had been on the run since reports of a vandalism. Deputies found him in the 1700 block of South Dora Street and arrested him. He's held on \$25,000.00 bail.

2 men from Ukiah have been arrested related to a stolen car earlier this week. The Sheriff's office reports getting a call Monday after a truck repair business reported seeing two people in a pickup truck that had been left for repairs. They called the owner of the truck who said nobody they knew would be there. So a deputy reported to the business and found the two men after finding the pickup had been broken into and it appeared there was a hot wire attempt. Deputies say the dashboard was damaged and loose wires were cut. Mason Harris recently released by the court for second degree burglary, and Patrick Schuetz on parole, found with tools on him used commonly in burglaries. Charges against the pair include attempted car theft, burglary and conspiracy. They were booked but released from jail due to rules around the COVID19 pandemic.

UC Hopland Research and Extension announcing ways to get out and enjoy nature in the midst of the pandemic. The center says small groups or pods can go explore, not only hiking trails, but the lamb barn. The visits this month, and possibly next on Saturdays. The lambing tours include a guided "find the lost sheep" walk to the barn, a visit with the lambs and a chance to bottle feed an orphan lamb. They say they'll also talk about how they produce sustainable fibers, fire fuel reduction, animal husbandry, and how they care for the lambs. Lambing time tours are at 10am, 11am and 12pm. And self-guided hikes have great views across Hopland out to Duncan's Peak. 9 people at the most in one social pod, and you have to follow all Mendocino County Health Orders and Research Center safety rules. There's a suggested price of \$100 per group for the lamb tours; or \$10 per person for the self-guided hikes.

Further details and online registration at: <http://bit.ly/HRECEvents>. Contact Hannah Bird at [hbird@ucanr.edu](mailto:hbird@ucanr.edu) or call (707) 744 1424 ext. 105 for further information or questions.

Since the Governor announced the next tier of residents could get the COVID19 vaccine, in Sonoma County residents 65 to 74 can join those 75 and older to get the shots. The county's Public Health Officer Dr. Sundari Mase says though that the next tier, or Phase 1B depends how many doses they get from the state and how many in the priority tier of healthcare workers want to be vaccinated. She says the group of 65-74 includes tens of thousands of people. Hundreds are being vaccinated at this point, though the county has received thousands of doses, but they include second doses for some who already got inoculated in the first group last month.

Students attending University of California campuses are coming back to mostly in person learning this fall. The announcement Monday for students at 10 campuses will get to return. The president said they're monitoring the pandemic and planning for a safe return of students in person. A statement by UC says the vaccines becoming available to students, staff and faculty will allow the campuses to go back to in person instead of virtual learning and that students will have to be "vigilant in all critical prevention efforts." The campus were hit hard financially by the pandemic, they say, losing hundreds of millions in housing and dining, plus enrollment dropped as some students didn't want to learn online.

Parents along with kids in Lake County hoping to get back to youth sporting have some hope ahead. "Let Them Play CA" is a statewide campaign with parents, coaches and youth advocates rallying this week on the issue. Locally tomorrow at 4 p.m. in Courthouse Museum Park. Community members are invited to a peaceful rally to support local youth sports teams. The movement is new, just put together in the last couple of weeks, but already has over 31,000 Facebook fans. There will be speakers at the rally talking about how to get back to courts and fields. COVID19 cases have not been that high in kids nationwide. In Calif., there are some school sports allowed, including cross country, golf, skiing and snowboarding, swimming and diving, tennis and track and field. If you attend the rally tomorrow they ask that you follow coronavirus public health best practices.

The first meeting of the year for the Lakeport Planning Commission featuring new commissioners taking the oath of office then discussing the idea of a microenterprise home kitchen operation. The proposed pilot program for the microenterprise was already approved by the Board of Supervisors in November. It's basically allowing kitchen operators at home to prepare meals for others, but they can't profit more than \$50,000/year. They can also only make up to 30 meals a day, or 60/week. The program would run thru the end of June and allow two permits a month and only two per supervisorial district.

Help is needed at the vaccine clinics in Ukiah. North Coast Opportunities is asking people to reach out to the fairgrounds for help until 4 pm today, and tomorrow from 8:30-12, 1-4 or all day @ Carl Purdy Hall. Contact Kaitlynn directly at [kyoung@ncoinc.org](mailto:kyoung@ncoinc.org) or 707-620-5063. Also tomorrow afternoon from 10-3 @ the Ukiah Valley Conference Center: contact Tami Bartolomei, [tbartolemei@cityofukiah.com](mailto:tbartolemei@cityofukiah.com). You do have to register thru North Coast's Volunteer Network as they're handling all of the volunteers for the vaccines this week. They say they will probably need even more volunteers too as the vaccine rollout continues to ramp up.

SAT and ACT are no longer necessary. A committee has found instead that the Smarter Balanced exam is better than either of the other two exams as it aligns with standards taught in California public schools and other UC admission requirements. The UC Board of Regents will take up the matter next week and no final decision has been made. A working group on the idea against the Smarter Balanced test as a way to choose students for admission though.

A mobile home park in Ukiah has a fire, and one of the homes there has been gutted. The fire yesterday at Rancho del Rey Estates, but nobody was injured, maybe a household pet, likely not a dog though. Neighbors tell Mendo Fever a man was charging his car battery which sparked. He ran into his house to grab a fire extinguisher, but it was too late, the car ignited and spread to the man's home, destroying the inside. PG&E reported to the scene to turn natural gas off and fire trucks also arrived. The mobile home park is located on the corner of Leslie Ave. and Gobbi Street.

A recall effort to remove Gov. Gavin Newsom is being called a coup. Democrats calling out the effort and comparing it to the insurrection at the US Capitol last week. The Calif. Democratic Party Chair says the recall effort should instead be called 'the California coup' and further blames right-wing conspiracy theorists, white nationalists, anti-vaxxers and groups encouraging violence against democratic institutions. The San Diego mayor who's a former Assemblymember, Todd Gloria says there's a "straight line from the horrible events of last week in Washington D.C. to the current events here in California." One of the recall organizers has reportedly been posting extremist views on social media, including one saying undocumented Californians should be "microchipped."

Cannavine, a marijuana dispensary on Airport Park Boulevard has had its permit renewed. The Zoning Dept. approved of the business saying a visit showed it to be clean, tidy and well managed with good security. Ukiah police had not reported any crime associated with the business so the renewal was approved. They're the only cannabis dispensary in Ukiah city limits.

Mendocino board members take up the failing freezer at Adventist Health were 800 doses of the coronavirus vaccine had to be quickly distributed. They also spoke about hiring more deputies due to an uptick in drug dealing and organized crime. 830 doses of the Moderna vaccine about to go bad as a refrigerator failed. The CEO of the hospital and Medical Officer say they made calls and gave the shot beyond the recommended tiers so they didn't waste any vaccines. The health department said they're working better to make sure all freezers are in working order. Some doses given at the jail and to county staff, and rumor has it some donors of the hospital had a chance to get the shot too, but we haven't confirmed that.

16 more people have died from coronavirus in Sonoma County. Public health officials report so far January may be the highest month for deaths in the county since the virus started to emerge last spring. The latest deaths reported this week from infections between Dec. 16th and Jan. 13th after holiday travel and gatherings. The county reported 22 deaths last week, the most so far. So 42 people have died the first two weeks of the new year, and 35 in all of December. There are about 100 people in the hospital too. The Press Democrat reports the surge in deaths and cases can be traced to elder care facilities. 143 residents of senior care sites have died since last year. The county's public health officer called the latest deaths and infections the darkest period of the pandemic, and to see them as the

01/15/21 vaccines are being distributed is especially heartbreaking.

A woman from Cloverdale has been arrested for bringing bear spray to the state Capitol for a demonstration. Police say 73 year old Margaret Shaw was arrested January 6th, the day of the US Capitol insurrection. She was one of 12 protesters arrested last Wednesday at the pro-Trump rally. She's accused of breaking a law prohibiting owning and using a tear gas weapon with over 2.5 ounces of aerosol spray. The others were apparently arrested on similar charges. Demonstrations are expected to pick back up ahead of and on inauguration day too, so a fence has been erected at the state Capitol and 1,000 National Guard members activated. Most of those in Sacramento protesting were not wearing masks. Shaw was charged with a misdemeanor and not jailed.

Just like what happened earlier this week in Ukiah, word of mouth dried up extra vaccines elsewhere in the state. Officials at Lompoc Valley Medical Center said they'd give out 100 doses to people over 75 Wednesday, and 350 people showed up, they all ended up getting their first shot though. More than 10 million are eligible to get the vaccine in the state right now, and 900,000 shots have been given. Reports that providers are not adhering the tier groups, like what happened after the freezer broke at Adventist Health and doses had to be distributed fast, or shots tossed in the trash. In Southern Calif. a hospital was vaccinating first responders because there were not enough health care workers who wanted available doses.

PG&E reports new technology helped them lessen the size of Public Safety Power Shutoffs in 2020. The utility reports putting in weather stations and cameras in the North Bay isolated the power grid into smaller segments and temporary generation and microgrids brought the power down events down about 55%. There were 1,000 weather stations and 340 cameras operating throughout Northern and Central California by the end of 2020. That helped them remove over 800,000 customers from last year's intentional power downs in fire weather or red flag warnings.

A man missing in Mendocino County ignites several search and rescue teams. The Sheriff's Office reports looking yesterday for 58-year-old Paul Duran in the Covelo area. They say he's been missing for over a week and could be somewhere around Mina Road on a remote piece of property. The Sheriff's office posted a picture of the man on their Facebook page. They say they've got nearly 5 dozen searchers trying to find him, not only from Mendocino County Search & Rescue, but also Lake County, Marin, Napa County Search & Rescue, from Contra County, Humboldt County and Sonoma County.

A head on crash on Highway 20 takes the life of a man from Williams. 61 year old David Surak was killed in the crash Wednesday afternoon on Highway 20 near mile post marker 21.10, east of Lucerne. The man reportedly crossed the double yellow lines and hit an SUV on the other side of the highway around a blind curve. The crash site then blocked both lanes and traffic backed up as firefighters made their way to the scene. Surak was taken to Adventist Health Clear Lake where he died. They say they're unsure at this point if drugs or alcohol were a factor in the crash.

New board members have been sworn into the Middletown Area Town Hall. It's the 14th year for the town hall and this year, they're meeting virtually due to the pandemic. It was a lot of rule talking and approving bylaws and such. They also got an update from the South Lake County Fire Council. They meet next February 11th.

Another round of stimulus money is being made available from Woodland Community College. The next round of grants for students during the spring 2021 semester. This round from the Federal Consolidated Appropriations Act 2021 which will come to students as direct cash payments that can be used on various items including enrollment fees, food, housing, healthcare and childcare. Those who've enrolled in six or more units this spring are eligible for grants between \$300 to \$550 and come automatically in February. The spring semester starts in a week, Monday, Jan. 25. The college says they'll also be expanding their emergency grant program for students with financial troubles related to education and housing.

Students should visit the college's website at <http://wcc.yccd.edu> or call the fi

During its board meeting this week the chief of the Little Lake Fire Protection District touted achievements made in 2020 amidst the pandemic. Chief Chris Wilkes also spoke about the new firehouse and says during the next month, weather permitting, a metal roof will be put in, insulation will be installed, interior walls will be framed, and aluminum windows also installed.

They're also apparently getting a new engine, new wildland turnouts and a new automated external defibrillator. The Chief says they will also be able to get their share of the City's Cannabis Excise Tax soon too, then will begin getting it twice a year.



A plan has been agreed to to bring kids back to Willits Charter School. The school has students from 6th-12th grade. They are looking at bringing students back for in person class starting in the middle of March. The Willits News reports the school's Director Charlene Bredder says teachers are starting to get vaccinated too, 20 out of their 32 educators have signed up to get the vaccine today. But apparently they weren't quite ready to get back to in person learning just yet. The Board of directors had their latest meeting Tuesday and approved a plan for 6th-graders to come back first and it's also optional, they can continue virtual learning if they prefer. There are already 11 of 24 6th graders doing in person learning. They also have someone taking charge of COVID planning for their two schools.

Lakeport police are warning residents about COVID vaccine scams. Apparently there have been some social media posts with various messages, one that you have to pay for an appointment. Officials say that's false. The County Health Department said earlier this week vaccination centers would start to be open 6 days a week in Lakeport and Clearlake and are provided in tiers. The schedule starts next Tuesday, but the clinics are open Monday – Saturdays. But this coming Monday is the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. Anyone in one of the tiers announced can get vaccinated, regardless of race or immigration status no matter what you read online. The health department says if someone's trying to sell you a reservation for a shot, it's a scam. The department says an 86 year old was scammed and someone got into their bank account and took \$15,000.

Assemblyman Jim Wood has been helping to vaccinate residents in Ukiah. The North Coast lawmaker took part in a vaccination event at the conference center in Ukiah where his office is located. He says he heard they needed help so he volunteered. The group he helped inoculate were in the first tier, 1A, frontline health care workers, he helped give the shots though to teachers and says there were about 250 people there including teachers or support staff. Wood works in forensic dentistry at a morgue.

A woman from Redwood Valley has been killed in a solo car crash. The CHP says the 82 year old woman's SUV rolled down an embankment along Main Ranch Road Wednesday. The patrol reports for some unknown reason, the woman went off the road and her SUV tumbled several times down an embankment and she did not have on a seat belt. She was ejected from the vehicle and died from her injuries at the scene of the crash.

The California Department of Public Health has reportedly found a mutated version of the coronavirus. So Santa Clara County and the University of California San Francisco announced the L452R variant of COVID-19 was identified. It's been in other countries and states and has apparently spread to several counties. The state is working with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), local public health departments and others to understand more about it and why it spreads faster than other variants. The state Epidemiologist says it further cements the need for all Californians to wear masks and not to gather with those outside your immediate household. And for anyone who may have been exposed to the virus to isolate. The variant found in various clusters in Santa Clara County, and now in Humboldt, Lake, Los Angeles, Mono, Monterey, Orange, Riverside, San Francisco, San Bernardino, San Diego and San Luis Obispo counties.

01/18/21

Police in Fort Bragg have arrested a man they say was threatening another man with a gun. Police got a call last Wednesday to a couple fighting and yelling at another person, who says he was leaving a business and they confronted him. The victim told police he didn't know the pair, they drove away while the victim was being questioned. The victim pointed them out to police who went after them, pulling over driver Jeremiah Rapp and passenger Stephanie Coatney Miller, both of Lake County. A records check showed Rapp was wanted on a felony warrant out of Marin County for Assault with a Deadly Weapon, False Imprisonment, and Intimidating a Victim. They say he claimed to be a member of both the "MS-13" and Sureños criminal street gangs. He challenged them to a fight, but then he surrendered and was arrested on several charges. He's booked into Mendocino County Jail where he awaits extradition to Marin County.

Lake County's Public Health Officer says it seems the steep post-holiday surge of cases of COVID-19 are leveling off, but there are still cases being identified, people being hospitalized, and 3 people died over the last week. There are also less ICU beds in the Northern Calif. region that includes both Lake and Mendocino Counties. The trigger is 15% or less capacity, where the entire RANCHO region is near. That could mean a new lockdown as the virus spreads across the state. Dr. Gary Pace says there are widespread vaccinations happening, but not nearly enough to meet the demand. Since Lake County started to get the vaccine about a month ago, they're offered it to most in the tier 1A. The county trying to get more shots and hope to get tier 1B vaccinated this week. That includes teachers and school staff, and those over 65. The Public Health Dept. isn't offering any public appointments as supply has been unpredictable and very limited notice is being given.

A man from Ukiah's been arrested for car theft and doing it during a state of emergency. The Sheriff's office reports Marco Antonio Alarcon Flores was seen in the Alexander Estates area last Wednesday after a dump trailer typically used at construction sites was stolen. Apparently one of those Ring doorbell cameras caught the whole thing. The video posted on the Sheriff's Office Facebook page which led to multiple tips. Alarcon Flores was found and interviewed, deputies then arrested him, and booked on \$15,000 bail. But they say he got out on bail quickly. They're also asking for the public's help finding the trailer, which has still not been recovered.

The Mendocino County Public Health Officer responding to that massive turnout to get the vaccine last week at the Redwood Empire Fairgrounds. Dr. Andy Coren typically gives a public talk on what's happening with the virus on Fridays. As we reported there was a mass turnout at the Fairgrounds after calls went out to those over 75 telling them they could get the vaccine. The public health dept. reports as many as 1,200 people got the vaccine. And nearly 6,000 people so far in the county have received the vaccine, not including those inoculated through hospitals, pharmacies or Indian Health Centers, about 10% of the population in the county. Coren says they've gotten many calls and they're working to answer every call and email. They're hiring more people at their call center and have put up a new vaccine webpage with the most up-to-date information about vaccination events. Eventually residents will be able to register to get the vaccine on the website.

That new coronavirus variant has been detected in the Bay Area. State health officials have connected clusters of outbreaks to the so-called L452R variant, this is not the one from the UK, but was linked to several outbreaks in Santa Clara County. Last year it was detected in other states and countries too. The Santa Clara County Public Health Officer says it shows the virus continues mutating and adapting and the need for everyone to follow all prevention measures and get vaccinated as soon as they are offered the vaccine. Another variant, the B.1.1.7 was first detected in the United Kingdom.

Another death linked to COVID19 has been reported in Mendocino County. On the Public Health Office coronavirus dashboard on Saturday, the 32nd death was posted along with several more cases of the virus. The public health dept. reports the death this time was a woman, over 68-years-old from the North Coast. They say she had been transferred to an out-of-county hospital and passed away there. There were nearly 40 more cases over the weekend, for a total so far of 3,114 positive cases in the county. The county reports vaccinating almost 6,000 people so far.

We could get some fire weather in January. The National Weather Service has issued a high wind warning for higher elevations across Central and Northern California. The warning starts this afternoon for areas higher than 1,000 feet and says there could be damaging winds of 60-70 mph from Big Sur to the North Bay mountains. Forecasters have also issued a fire weather watch, pretty rare for this time of year. They do say however that since more rain is expected in the North Bay, there's not as much of a risk. The main area of concern seems to be the Santa Cruz Mountains. There were also record breaking warm temperatures yesterday, not summer like, but still many places reaching into the low-mid 70's, matching records set in 1920.

The unemployment claim fraud debacle is starting to crystallize. The state may have paid out as much as \$10 billion in fake coronavirus unemployment claims, two times as much as previously thought. And some of the cash being sent to far flung places, like to Russia, China and other countries, as part of organized crime rings. The state Employment Development Department got swindled and until they found the fraud and put controls in place last fall, they say about 10% of all claims were not from unemployed Californians. Reports of people in 20 other countries collecting billions in benefits. The state has processed over 16 million claims since last March, sending \$43 billion from a federal expedited assistance program for independent contractors, gig workers and the self-employed that was less secure.

The Lakeport Unified School District Board has met over Zoom and limited in person at the start of the new year. They discussed how to get back to in person learning. Students commented that the distance learning has been a struggle and brought ideas to the board. One student spoke as a representative of the California Association of Student Councils saying they should send out an anonymous survey to students to see how they're faring with distance learning. She said that would allow student administrators to understand students' mental health, their home environment, life workload and overall performance as compared to before times. The Superintendent of schools says they're changing over to a different testing system and will start vaccines for those who want them, 40 people said no to the shots.

A man from Napa has been arrested on mass explosives and weapons charges. The Napa County Sheriff's Office arrested 44-year-old Ian Benjamin Rogers who they say was in possession of illegal assault rifles, automatic weapons and explosives. He's held on \$5 million bail. Deputies armed with search warrants went to his home and business after getting a tip. They found over 50 guns (several unregistered and/or illegal), more than 15 thousand rounds of ammo and several pounds of gun powder. They found 5 pipe bombs in a safe at his place of business. He was arrested Friday and booked on multiple charges including possessing an assault weapon, possessing explosive materials, transporting an assault weapon and several misdemeanors.

The Governor and the LA Mayor are out with the word that Dodger stadium will be the next mass vaccine site. They hope to ramp up the site so it's capable of administering 12,000 shots a day, even though it's anybody's guess as to when or how many more vaccine doses the state will get. The Gov. says they'll be able to communicate more fully with the public after they get more information about why reserve doses of the vaccine were no longer available from the federal government, but in fact, were already sent out across the country. The Governor of Oregon and a US Senator from the state of Washington tweeted last week about the failure and frustration of getting more vaccine as promised.

The vaccine has been distributed to hundreds of Ukiah Unified School District employees. The Daily Journal reports the Covid-19 vaccinations were administered last Friday at one of at least two large events held in Ukiah. This one conducted at the Ukiah Valley Conference Center. The school superintendent says over 600 UUSD staff members will have received the vaccine, which was almost all their staff. Adventist Health also announced walk-ins were available last Friday for those over 75 years old and for healthcare workers. The Public Health Office reported getting almost 2,000 doses of the Pfizer vaccine, administering all but 900 were left. The county also got 500 doses of the Moderna vaccine, all of which were administered.

The state's Epidemiologist says they had to dump some Moderna vaccines because they were causing an inordinate amount of allergic reactions. One lot number had a higher than usual number of reactions according to Dr. Erica Pan who recommended pausing the inoculations yesterday. Dr. Pan says that particular lot was at a vaccine clinic and less than 10 people needed medical attention. She says out of an extreme abundance of caution, while also acknowledging an extremely limited supply of vaccine, they were recommending providers use other available vaccine inventory and pause the administration of that Moderna Lot (041L20A) until there was an investigation by the CDC, FDA, Moderna and the state.

Word that a lot of the Moderna Vaccine had caused severe allergic reactions at a clinic in San Diego has put the state on pause for a moment in inoculations. The Mendocino Public Health Office says the county gave a shot to about 100 coast residents from the lot Sunday at Adventist Health. Now the hospital says they're also pausing the administration of the vaccine even though none of their patients had an adverse reaction. The hospital says they're in touch with the patients who got a shot and have not heard of any complications or severe reactions. The state ordered a pause on shots and Adventist says they're following the state's guidance. The hospital reports over 300,000 doses from that lot were distributed across the state

01/19/21 with a very small percentage experiencing complications.

A quick power outage reported in Mendocino County. A bunch of people posted last night before 8 on social media, their lights clicked off, then on. The reports from Ukiah, Fort Bragg, Covelo, Redwood Valley, Willits, Brooktrails, Yorkville, and some in Lake County too. MendoFever reports PG&E's monitoring technology didn't pick up the electricity flickers and didn't receive any reports of an outage.

A young man from Willits has been arrested after reports of a domestic battery incident with his girlfriend. Deputies say they got a call from an 18 year old woman reported an incident from a few days before. They say she had visible injuries to her face, caused by her live-in 19 year old boyfriend, Romeo Lopez. Deputies say the man punched the woman in the face and arrested him. He's held on \$25,000.00 bail.

Like the Public Health Officer has said, Sonoma County's in the darkest period of the pandemic so far. The Press Democrat reports this month, which still has nearly 2 weeks more has been the County's deadliest. Five more people died yesterday for a total of 47 this month and 239 overall since last March. The chair of the Board of Supervisors says the latest deaths show we have to do everything in our power to slow the spread of the virus. Before this, the biggest spike in deaths, were 43, but that was over an entire month of the summer. Deaths at skilled nursing or assisted living facilities are making up 64% of the total deaths, and elderly residents comprise 80% of all deaths.

A wildfire reported in the hills above Geyserville where forecasters reported wind gusts that had reached 85 mph. The Old Fire was reported last night before 10 off Big Geysers Road. The fire's reportedly burned 10 acres so far but the wind was challenging firefighters. The National Weather Service reported one gust measured 94 mph, one of the strongest windstorms in the North Bay in years. There are no structures threatened so far. More firefighters are also being sent out close to the The Geysers geothermal fields. And PG&E representatives and others reported the utility's power equipment was damaged by the winds but there were no planned power shut-offs.

A tiny corner of the state reported to be one where COVID's not being taken seriously, still the police chief went and got his first shot of a COVID19 vaccine. The town of Corning hosted a vaccination clinic for the city's firefighters and police officers. The Press Democrat reports there's pandemic skepticism in rural Northern California. But still health officials in Northern Calif. aim to vaccinate nearly 700,000 people. There's fear though that the vaccine is unsafe and serious pushback against public health orders. One doctor says there are anti-vaxxers or those who think the pandemic is a hoax or was going away after the presidential election. Some towns have restaurants open for indoor dining, maskless in Tehama County.

There have now been nearly 3 million confirmed cases of coronavirus in Calif. The daily tally by Johns Hopkins University had Calif. crest over the milestone, but the state has it just under that number. We're the first state to do so. 2 million cases were recorded by Dec. 24th, and the next million 3 weeks later. Almost a year after the first coronavirus case in the state. It took almost a year to hit one million cases, then 44 more days to get to 2 million. The only two states close to Calif., Texas with over 2 million and Florida with over 1.5 million. Calif. is also getting close to 34,000 deaths. The number of cases have been climbing since Halloween. The state is hopeful that mass vaccinations will finally slow the spread as a batch of the Moderna vaccine was reportedly causing a severe reaction in some recipients, so the inoculations are on pause for a moment.

### [A new grant program allowing nonprofits in Mendocino County to get money i](#)

The Scotts Valley Energy Company has won a grant to fight climate change. The company's owned by the Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians. They won the Tribal Government Challenge Planning Grant so they can come up with a bioenergy feasibility toolkit for other Tribes and businesses. They've won \$248,000 from the California Energy Commission (CEC) in partnership with the California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) to focus on Tribal governments and how Tribes help California reach its climate goals. The grants generally go between \$215,000 to \$250,000 and pay for clean energy projects, including energy storage, renewables, biomass, and community and energy resilience to climate impacts.

A woman from Willits has been arrested after a report by the victim his wife slapped him. Mendocino Deputies say the 48 year-old man said he and wife Shaniquea Bent-Middleton had an argument and she hit him in the face, then picked up a wooden stool and hit him with it. He put up his arm to block the stool, but she got him instead in the arm. Deputies say he had visible injuries and swelling on his arm so the woman was arrested and charged with domestic violence battery. She's held on \$25,000.00 bail.

Winds recorded at almost 100 mph in Sonoma County have caused widespread damage and shut down power to thousands. PG&E reports 6,500 people lost power after the damaging winds took down trees and knocked out electricity from east Santa Rosa to Monte Rio. Firefighters in Santa Rosa reportedly had multiple calls about trees and power lines down last night and this morning. One gust of wind even blew the roof off a car port at a mobile home park. Several small brush fires were also reported near where the massive Tubbs fire burned in 2017. The National Weather Service reported winds over 80 mph and even hitting over 90 mph in the Mayacamas Mountains. One PG&E weather station recorded a 97 mph wind gust. There's still a wind advisory in effect until 6pm tonight.

A fire that broke out above Geyserville is now 60% contained. The Old Fire was reported at 10 acres last night, but this morning Cal Fire reported it was under 2 acres off Big Geysers Road east of Geyserville. They say even though winds were whipping fast in the area the flames were not spreading that fast and no structures were being threatened. PG&E reported some of their equipment in the area was damaged, but they had not planned power shutoffs there. They say even though wind gusts neared 100mph, humidity, rain and other factors led them not to shut off power to prevent their equipment from sparking wildfires.

01/20/21

The California Attorney General Xavier Becerra sticking it to the Trump administration nine more times. Yesterday the Democratic Atty. General filed nine lawsuits against President Trump's administration. Becerra in a parting shot, as he is President-elect Joe Biden's nominee for Health and Human Services Secretary. Becerra has taken the Trump administration to court 122 times. This latest against several environmental rule changes which Becerra says weaken protections for migratory birds, exempt some clothing washing and drying machines from energy efficiency standards, loosen regulation of greenhouse gas emissions from the oil and gas industry, and relax rules on toxic air pollutants.

A stabbing in Ukiah has left one person dead and another in jail. Deputies reporting to an apartment complex on Laws Avenue yesterday morning. Mendo Fever reports a neighbor said there was police presence outside the Greystone Apartments and yellow crime scene tape was seen on the balcony outside the second-story apartment. She reported being woken up by yelling and saw a handful of detective vehicles, and the coroner van.

The Mayor and Vice Mayor of Fort Bragg putting out a public statement denouncing the recent violence at the US Capitol and across the country. Mayor Bernie Norvell and Vice Mayor Jessica Morsell-Haye's statement say the peaceful transfer of elected leadership is a core tenet of democracy, adding as public officials their oath is to protect the constitution against enemies both foreign and domestic. They called the US Capitol insurrection a direct assault on democratic processes and the constitution of the United States.

After the state reported some severe allergic reactions to a batch of the Moderna vaccine, Sonoma County has set aside 7,500 doses. Mendocino County apparently administered 100 doses from the potentially harmful lot of the vaccine. Sonoma County says it's now an obstacle to get 100,000 residents over the age of 65 inoculated. The rest of that batch was put on administration pause by the state's lead epidemiologist Sunday. Six people in San Diego experienced bad allergic reactions at a vaccination event at Petco Park. All of them reportedly landed in the hospital over a 24-hour period. The state received over 330,000 doses from the lot. The Mendocino County Public Health Officer says since these are new vaccines, these events are not unexpected, and should not stop the public from getting vaccinated.

Several dozen restaurants and wineries in both Sonoma and Napa counties are suing Gov. Gavin Newsom and the state's public health officer because of public safety restrictions. The group has named itself Wine Country Coalition for Safe Reopening. The 50 businesses say the latest stay-home order which only allows takeout and delivery service is "draconian." The group says their aim is to get the outdoor dining and outdoor wine tasting ban lifted calling the restrictions arbitrary and unfair. The group is also seeking financial compensation for unspecified economic losses due to the restrictions.

The state auditor has released a new report saying some of the coronavirus relief money received from the federal government did not reach enough smaller communities. Auditor Elaine Howle says the state finance department's way of distributing the money was overly generous to several counties, giving them "nearly double the total per person amount of [federal] funding compared with California's 42 other counties." Howle says if more money comes to the state this year, it should be distributed in a more equitable way. Howle's office says the process used by the Governor's Office of Emergency Services was to decide if cities defied state public health orders so they wouldn't get a share of COVID-19 relief funds and it wasn't a consistent process.

So many challenges, like across the country, with the distribution of the coronavirus vaccine in Lake County. The Public Health Officer Dr. Gary Pace in remarks to the Board of Supervisors yesterday as cases continue skyrocketing, almost 200 new cases since Friday. He also reported two new deaths. The county has reported over 2,600 cases of the disease and 30 deaths. Dr. Pace told the board that there was so much virus spreading that if you're out in the community you'd come into contact with it. He says hospitals are quickly filling up and eight people were in ICU beds, which were also almost filled up. Dr. Pace also filled the board in on vaccinations, inoculating 400 people a week. Dr. Pace says based on the current distribution by the state, it would take until the end of 2022 to vaccinate only half the county.

The Lake County Board of Supervisors has held a special meeting after cases of COVID19 broke records. The board looking to stop in person services for the public to slow the spread. It's just temporary, but it means county services for the public will be as limited as they were at the beginning of the pandemic. The board had closed its chambers two weeks ago. The County Administrative Officer reported "worsening pandemic conditions in recent weeks" including more positive cases in county workers too. Also two weeks ago, the board created an ad hoc committee on the pandemic and Worksite Protection Protocol. The committee supporting closing services back down for right now until the pandemic can be reined in.

An ad hoc committee has been created in Clearlake to work on a youth sports complex plan. The city council to create the committee at their meeting tomorrow to consider the 31 acre property the city bought last year for the proposed complex. The council will also discuss concealed weapon permits and discuss an expansion of the Automated License Plate Recognition. That helps cops in criminal cases and to also find stolen vehicles. The meeting is tomorrow online only. You can catch it on the city's YouTube channel or local cable and Zoom for whoever wants to participate. Congressman Mike Thompson holding a virtual town hall again on the pandemic. Over nearly a year Thompson has been having guests join him in these town halls. It'll be tomorrow night at 7p on Zoom and his Facebook page. It's the second town hall this year and a day after the inauguration of the new President. Thompson's town hall this week is a general one, with all topics welcome.

One of the new strains of coronavirus has arrived in Humboldt County. The state Department of Public Health made the announcement of the variant Sunday. It was apparently first detected in the state last May, but the agency says since November, the strain is surfacing more, in about 25% of the total cases in Calif. A study into the strain shows it may be more infectious and could affect the efficacy of the vaccines, but the study authors say it needs to be studied more.

A Northern Calif. environmental group says a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service rule put in place in the last days of the Trump administration may mean extinction for the northern spotted owl. A new rule published last week which stops a protection from logging on 3.4 million acres of the species' habitat across Northern California, Oregon and Washington. The once protected area includes conservation territories and nearly half of the Pacific Northwest northern spotted owl's deeply forested, critical habitat. The lands are managed by the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. The state though could make a scientific decision on behalf of the owl.



The first day of popup vaccination clinics has taken place in Lake County. The Public Health Officer, Dr. Gary Pace says the region that includes the county is still at a "tipping point." But Dr. Pace says the demand is higher than the supply of the vaccine. Pace is still calling on the public to stay inside, where a mask, have good hygiene and not to gather for the next several weeks. The comments as 2 more deaths are also confirmed. Right now, as doses allow, those in the Tier 1B, those 65 and older, teachers and school staff can get the vaccine in the county, following the federal and state guidance on distribution.

A man accused of a bank robbery in Ukiah has been arrested. Police say Dean Stevens who was on supervision after being released from prison was seen on surveillance video at the bank Tuesday. The clerk at the Chase Bank on S. State Street told police the suspect came in demanded money, telling them it was a robbery, but never showed a weapon. He got more than \$3,000 and took off. Officers quickly looked at pictures taken of the man during the crime, identifying him as Stevens. They put out an alert to find him and what kind of car he was in, then yesterday he was found at a Travel Lodge where he registered under his own name. He was found to be wearing the same clothes as in the pictures taken of the robbery suspect and found with a bag of cash. He's in jail on various felony charges.

01/21/21

A man from Ukiah's been arrested on attempted murder charges. Cops got a call to the Sunrise Inn motel 2 weeks ago after several people reported a woman, who had been dating Phillip Lopez, and another woman were assaulted by him. Police say they knew from previous contacts. The man apparently approached one woman who said she didn't want to talk to him while she was with a friend. She got into that friend's car and the two say Lopez approached the car and started hitting the window and broke it and that he threatened them and fired a gun at them. They weren't hurt and he left. Lopez wasn't found until this week, with the help of Marshalls and various law enforcement agencies. He's charged with attempted murder and violation of parole.

A man in Ukiah has been arrested after reports this week for a stabbing at an apartment building on Laws Ave. On Monday early morning calls to police and the Sheriff's Office after the stabbing of Jordan Luna. He was reportedly in a second story apartment which a neighbor said yesterday was surrounded by crime scene tape. Now police say it was his brother, Jeremiah who stabbed him to death. The brother was arrested and found to already be on parole. He's been booked into jail and held on \$500,000.00 bail. The Sheriff's Office says they're still investigating the circumstances surrounding the incident, like what the motive was.

A high speed chase with a car theft suspect leads to their arrest in Willits. Police say it was a short chase yesterday morning after an alert went out for the stolen grey Jetta. The Police Chief says patrol cars were stationed on Hwy 20 leading into the city and saw the car speeding by and took chase. The flipped on their sirens and lights and flew thru Main Street. The car entered a shopping center parking lot, came out sped through lights and crossed double yellow lines and tried to turn into a Safeway parking lot with no luck as he was cornered after crashing into the Safeway gas station sign. He got out and ran but was cornered by officers. He was treated at the hospital for minor injuries, no officers were hurt and the suspect, Joshua Frailey, a 19 year old from Oakland was jailed for car theft and other charges.

Several staff members from the Willits Unified School District inoculated for the coronavirus. At a school board meeting the Superintendent announced 110 staff members were going to get the Moderna Coronavirus vaccine on Jan. 16th at the Willits Harrah Senior Center. That included all of the classroom teachers who wanted it and some custodial and administrative staff. The superintendent reportedly worked with Howard Memorial Hospital, the Senior Center and a local physician to get the shots into arms. The School Board President said it was encouraging and could be a way to reopen classrooms sooner rather than later. Also at the board meeting the superintendent said they had various open positions and no applicants, they include maintenance and custodial positions.

Volunteer firefighters from Mendocino have received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. The shots nearly two weeks ago now. The fire department thanked Adventist Health Mendocino Coast for getting the vaccinations to them. Pictures of the firefighters show smiles and one remarked it was not painful at all. The department put out a statement saying they have not had hardships like other emergency agencies but felt a deep-rooted connection to their brothers and sisters who have faced unfathomable hardship. They go on to say they want to encourage everyone to continue following county health guidelines and protocols and to show appreciation to frontline workers who have worked tirelessly to help keep our communities running.

Congressman Jared Huffman assuring those getting payments from the federal government due to the pandemic, that they are not junk mail. The Economic Impact Payments (EIPs) apparently had some worried they were bogus or scam payments because of the way the envelope looked. The money started to go out the second week of the month thru the U.S. Treasury Department and the Internal Revenue Service. The envelope has big red letters saying "Not a bill or an advertisement. Important information about your Economic Impact Payment". They are checks or debit cards, something Rep. Huffman said he himself didn't understand. But he says he's confident they're safe and secure. He also said he wasn't sure why they'd use Visa Cards unless they were looking to take a percentage.

The city of Lakeport has entered into an agreement with an Architectural firm to finish the first phase of its recreation feasibility study. The city council approved the proposal from BCA Architects as long as the city can get a cost-sharing agreement approved with Lake County and the City of Clearlake to pay equally for the feasibility study. It would be about \$20,000 each to start phase one with the total cost of just over \$150,500. The Record Bee reports the county's Community Services Department and the City of Clearlake have given a verbal go ahead to partner with the city of Lakeport on the project. There will be two phases for the initial study, the project overview, market analysis, coming up with a citizen participation plan and partnerships and reviewing findings.

A man accused of stealing guns and showing up at a party in the woods with a gun has a trial set. The jury trial for Michael Anthony Dore set to start next Monday after the case had been continued due to the pandemic. The court ordered Dore to be able to get a haircut and be provided with street clothes for the trial. He's pleaded not guilty to carrying a loaded firearm in a public place, carrying a firearm that is capable of being concealed, permitting other person to carry a firearm in vehicle and assault with firearm on person. The charges after someone called deputies last Sept. to say their home had been burglarized of weapons and blamed it on 18 year old Dore. They also said Dore was at Highland Springs Reservoir and shot his gun off there. A victim confirmed the incident. Dore was arrested afterwards but denied any of the allegations against him. He's been in jail ever since on \$300,000 bail.

A workshop's planned for the public on the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument's Bureau of Land Management Trails and Travel Management. The workshop next Thursday, Jan. 28th from 5:30 to 8 p.m online. The BLM and Mendocino National Forest co-manage the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument. The workshop so members of the public and any others interested get a glimpse of the vision for travel management at the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument. They will use the info gathered to designate roads and trails for motorized, non-motorized and non-mechanized recreation. The workshop will include a map for all to see and an overview of roads and trails within the monument, show the current status of travel management, an overview of the BLM travel management process, and feature opportunities to provide input.

The State of California says that batch of the Moderna coronavirus vaccine that caused severe reaction in some people is ok to use. The lot of vaccines were put on pause so nobody else would get ill. Several doses were reportedly administered in Mendocino County with no reaction. And now more than 300,000 doses are able to be used by counties, cities and hospitals who've been trying to get ahold of supplies. The state Department of Public Health said the batch should be shelved for the moment after some people at a San Diego vaccination site were hospitalized. But apparently after chatting with Moderna, local and federal health agencies, the state's lead epidemiologist found there was no scientific basis to "continue the pause" and the vaccinations could "immediately resume".

Fast moving winds closed Yosemite National Park. The park staying closed over the weekend as two massive sequoias fell, causing millions of dollars in damage. Park officials were looking at reopening Tuesday, but areas south of Yosemite Valley, including one entrance are staying closed. It's after high winds on Monday took down trees and power lines across the state. 300,000 homes and businesses were without electricity and some utility companies also intentionally blacked out tens of thousands of homes and businesses to try to stop their equipment from starting any fires. Park officials say trees smashed trucks and damaged buildings, including employee homes and came down onto a boardwalk and bathroom just installed during a multi-million dollar restoration project. Campgrounds and

01/22/21 lodges were already closed because of coronavirus.

Millions spent on shoring up security at the Calif. Capitol on inauguration day. National Guard troops and fencing fortifying the area after the insurrection at the US Capitol 2 weeks ago. The state reportedly put almost \$19 million dollars into the extra security. The Governor's Office of Emergency Services says they're maintaining some of the security the next several days. They reported only one Trump supporter showed up on Wednesday as Biden took his oath of office. And there was also a small group of counter protesters at parks close to the Capitol. There were no confrontations reported. The same scene across many state capitols across the country, in Portland, OR and Seattle, WA there were some arrests.

[A website is up and running in Calif from a group of volunteers to track where](#)

A petition to get Shanél (Sanel) Valley Academy as a Charter School approved. Trustees had a special meeting Wednesday and said yes to a recommendation for the petition's approval from the school district. It'll be for kids in Transitional Kindergarten to 6th grade, but they said no to grades 7 and 8. The whole thing is also contingent on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Ukiah Unified by May 13th and a proof of facilities agreement by May 1st. The board president said she was excited and looked forward to the school's success as kids in Hopland deserve to go to school in their home community. This means kids in Hopland won't have to hop a bus to get to school in Ukiah.

Ukiah city officials say the amount of new Covid-19 cases in the county is down, but there are not as many vaccines as they would like. The City Manager Sage Sangiacomo reporting to the city council this week, the lack of vaccine is not due to anything to do with the city, but a lack of supply. The Emergency Services Administrator was not there, but someone in her department says they had three pop up vaccination clinics at the Ukiah Valley Conference Center which have administered about 500 doses. That came after the freezer failure at Adventist Health, another clinic a week later where teachers and school staff got inoculated and a third event the same week. The county's still reporting 35-40 cases/day, slightly down. So far the county's had 3,206 cases and 32 deaths.

A handful of Calif. school districts say the Gov. needs to rework his school reopening plan. Five organizations who represent school districts and county offices of education that said nothing on the plan before are looking to get school districts to begin reopening with major revisions so the Governor's plan would be more workable. A letter sent to the Gov. Tuesday with revisions as the Senate was to take up the Governor's \$2 billion plan to help districts adopt a safety and health protection plan, COVID19 testing procedures and a schedule to start to phase in the return of elementary students. The group recommending changes so districts have more flexibility on testing, have the state pay for all testing and not have labor unions in charge of safety protocols. They also want liability protection and more availability of substitute teachers.

It wasn't just 100 doses of the supposedly tainted batch of Moderna Vaccine, more like 400. Mendocino County Public Health reports before the state put a pause on a Moderna vaccine lot connected to an event in San Diego where recipients had a severe reaction, the county used some of the same batch at an event at the Redwood Empire Fairgrounds Jan. 7th, 300 more doses from the same batch at an event for seniors at Adventist Health in Willits. First the county said they had not used any, then came back and said 100 were used and they'd contact those who got it. Then we here about the Adventist health event. The county says they expect the hospital to be in touch with the 300 who received it there because they got it directly from the state and the county has no access to their vaccine information or their lot numbers. The state has since said the batch could start being used again after some consultations on the matter.

A man accused of buying and selling stolen property and DUI has been denied probation. Jerry Lee Thorpe in court this month after an April 2019 incident in Lucerne where he crashed into a tree in a stolen car while under the influence. Court papers say Thorpe has a history of drug use and he was under the influence during the crimes so he couldn't get probation. He was found guilty of buying, selling or receiving stolen property and DUI and sent to prison for a year, plus he was fined over \$1,600. He is due to turn himself in next month. The CHP said at the time the car was stolen from Santa Rosa.

The police chief in Clearlake has received approval from the city council to put up more cameras around town to help solve more crimes. Chief Andrew White asked the council for additional cameras, but no more than \$65,000 as part of the Automated License Plate Recognition Program, which they started last fall. It's generally used for detecting stolen vehicles, the chief says it's also good for helping them find wanted and missing persons, plus already they've use it to help in a drug-related shooting; and for finding, then arresting someone wanted on an out-of-state kidnapping warrant.

As far as the pace of vaccines in Calif, a top official says it could take up to five months for the 65 and older group. The state's lead epidemiologist, Dr. Erica Pan says the data comes from the state population of around 6.2 million people age 65 and over. They'd like to get at least 70% vaccinated or nearly 4.5 million seniors, but the current rate of doses from the federal government is 400-500,000 doses a week which means it would be June before that group was vaccinated. Dr. Pan speaking to a panel with others there saying under the new federal administration there's a better chance to fight the virus and things will speed up shortly.

The man who was renting out space to artists at that doomed warehouse in Oakland that burned down and killed 36 people will plead guilty at his second trial. The master tenant of the Ghost Ship, Derrick Almerna is set to plead guilty today to avoid a second trial. His first for the 2016 fire ended in a hung jury. Prosecutors reportedly telling the families of some of the victims he's pleading to 36 counts of involuntary manslaughter for a nine-year sentence. And he could get little to no time depending on the time he's already spent in jail and for good behavior, something that has some of the families up in arms about, saying it's just like a slap on the wrist. He was in jail since 2017 but was released in May because of the pandemic. He's been on house arrest with an ankle monitor in Upper Lake.

01/25/21 The Mendocino County Public Health Officer says cases are flattening and that may mean an end to the holiday surge. Public Health Officer Dr. Andy Coren says it's still a bit early to say for sure, but the daily case rate was under 30/day for the first time since early this month. There are however two more deaths to report for a total of 36 now. 14 people are in the hospital including one in an ICU. Coren gave his weekly update Friday and as of that date, 6,700 people had received a first dose of either the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine thru the Public Health office and 320 people had received a second dose. There are others who've also been vaccinated thru Adventist Health, pharmacies and Indian Health Services. Supplies in the county now are all for second doses.

The Ukiah Unified School District holding town halls to discuss getting back to

SPANISH Virtual Town Hall for all grades will be held on Monday, Jan. 25 from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. on the UUSD Live Youtube channel at [www.youtube.com/channel/ucvrrjxt-cilbvvdmszq2aw9q](http://www.youtube.com/channel/ucvrrjxt-cilbvvdmszq2aw9q).

The Middle and High School virtual town hall will be held on Wednesday, Jan. 27 from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. on the Youtube channel at [www.youtube.com/channel/ucvrrjxt-cilbvvdmszq2aw9q](http://www.youtube.com/channel/ucvrrjxt-cilbvvdmszq2aw9q).

Sherwood Firewise has the agenda set for the year. The group met about a week and a half ago discussing last year's accomplishments. They talked about an Emergency Access Route being open which had been used for the Oak Fire last summer, the Willits Creek Emergency Access Route funding being secured and adding more access routes which are currently being negotiated with Supervisor John Haschak. They say the Oak Fire evacuation was the smoothest ever with the Mendocino County Sheriff, CAL Fire and Brooktrails Fire Department. The group also talked about getting the Firewise USA recognition for 2020-2021. Right now, the biggest project they're working on is creating a CSA zone for continued maintenance of their Emergency Access Routes. The meeting on that is today at 1:30 p.m. It might go on a little longer. It's been more than 2 weeks of no service from Altice/Suddenlink. They've got an active dispute with Cox Media Group and say Cox dropped NBC and CBS TV stations after raising prices. Altice accusing Cox and Cox in turn accusing them of adversely affecting customers instead of agreeing to "a fair market deal." The Times-Standard newspaper says the cut of channels could mean some can't view the Superbowl. But there are other services the community cannot see because of the feud between the two media companies. Suddenlink tells the newspaper it was not their decision and blames Cox for jacking up prices above what they and customers pay any other broadcaster.

The FBI has a be on the lookout alert for the so-called, "Lost Coast bandit". The FBI reported last week the suspect had robbed the Central Coast Credit Unions in Eureka and Arcata and that in all three crimes, the man passed a note threatening to shoot the teller and/or all customers if any alarms were activated or dye packs deployed. The man is described as White, around 5-foot 6 to 5-foot 8-inches tall, 170 pounds, medium build and at the time wore a Fox of Dickies hoodie and dark pants. Agents say they're not sure if the thief is from the area. Local police said they weren't sure where the Lost Coast name came from. The robberies were from December to January. The last caper on January 16th was caught on surveillance footage.

The yearly Point-in-Time (PIT) count is set to happen this week. In Lake County they report there will be modifications due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The county's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration reports the federal dept. of Housing and Urban Development requires Continuum of Care organizations to count people without shelter over the last ten days of January. In Lake County it's this Thursday. There will be a limited number of surveys done this year over the phone as well as in person counts. They will call case managers who work with those without shelter and places like the Veterans' Association. And the Lake County Office of Education is calling families and reporting back too.

A man from Clearlake had a court appearance online with the court finding good cause to continue against the man on several charges including murder. 63 year old Thomas Magee accused of running down someone walking in Lucerne then leaving the scene. The two apparently involved in a dispute over property. The case will start in April after being rescheduled from this Wednesday. He's charged with vehicular manslaughter, murder, two counts of assault with a deadly weapon, attempted murder and hit and run for the September 2019 incident. Police say the hit and run of Joseph Symond Jackson was murder. Magee was arrested last fall on murder charges and held on \$1 million bail.

Congressman Mike Thompson has introduced a mental health access bill again with a counterpart from New York. Thompson's office reports he and Congressman John Katko have announced they've reintroduced the Mental Health Access Improvement Act. The bipartisan bill looks to address the mental health care gap for seniors with an expansion of providers for those who use Medicare. Thompson says they've reintroduced the bill because it's hard for seniors to get mental health care. He says this would allow them to see a broader group of qualified mental health care providers through Medicare. Right now seniors cannot see mental health counselors and marriage and family therapists with the same training and education as other providers but can't get reimbursed by Medicare.

The Clearlake Planning Commission continues to look at a property swap with the county to develop residential units. The commission will look at the general plan and consider if the property needs an environmental review. One of the properties is under a quarter of an acre and is being donated to the city by the last surviving owner of Crown Holding Co. the other is 16.28 acres of county-owned property for housing units. The smaller one the old state-owned Lakeport Armory, which it wants to use for a new headquarters for the Lake County Sheriff's Office. Clearlake looking to use the larger property for multilevel income housing, recreational/open space areas, and commercial retail/medical offices.

The state Department of Public Health has ended the Regional Stay at Home Order, but has gone back to the colored tier system. The changes because the three regions that were under the strict lock downs are over 15% ICU capacity, that was what triggered the closures. The region we're in in Northern California, the RANCHO area was not in the order to begin with. But the regions that were can get back to outdoor dining and indoor salons finally as part of the Blueprint for a Safer Economy. The tier updates are given weekly on Tuesdays. The director of the public health dept. for the state says citizens heard their urgent message and accepted the challenge to slow the spread of the virus and save lives. The dept. says there are positive signs the virus is slowing again, but the pandemic is a long way from ending. As a reminder to continue to wear masks, maintain physical distance of at least 6 feet, wash hands frequently, avoid gatherings and mixing with other households, follow all state and local health department guidance and get the vaccine when it's your turn.

The BLM in Ukiah working with Cal Fire Sonoma Lake Napa Unit will be doing a prescribed burn on the northeast side of Mt. Konocti in Kelseyville. The pile burns in the Black Forest area along Soda Bay Road this week and continuing here and there this winter and thru the spring, weather permitting. It's part of the shaded fuel break project started back in 2008 to improve landscape health and get rid of hazardous fuels that could move wildland fires where public lands meet urban development.

The Lake County Public Health Officer says there's still a surge of cases of COVID19 across the county, the highest rate so far and hospitals are feeling stressed. Dr. Pace says this is most likely the worst phase of the pandemic, and there's no way to know how long it will last. Vaccine distribution around California is being managed by the State Department of Public Health; and what the counties get from the state is based on population. Lake county's been getting only about 400 doses/week. There are priority phases 1a and 1b currently getting their vaccines. Safeway in Lakeport is taking appointments for those tier groups, check online to see what group you're in, then you can make an appointment thru Safeway Pharmacy. There's also a new vaccine site at the Lakeport Fairgrounds and Senior Center in Clearlake by appointment only. Right now there are no appointments for the general public.

Mendocino County has announced the second vaccination event for those who were first in line to get the first Pfizer vaccine January 6th or 7th. This event is ONLY for those already vaccinated on those days at the Redwood Empire Fairgrounds and waiting to get their second dose. The second dose is on Wednesday, by appointment only at the Redwood Empire Fairgrounds from 9a-4p and not open to the public. Those with appointments have to bring their identification and vaccination card. For an appointment, visit the county's Vaccine Scheduling Page.

A man from Laytonville's been arrested after the CHP found a wanted man they say caused a disturbance at a business last week. The CHP reports responded to the area and contacted Levi Lamoureux who they say tried to steal some stuff from the business but was told to leave. They say he wouldn't leave and started to harass customers. Deputies say he was on active parole so they searched him and found an unspent 7mm rifle cartridge, so they arrested him for being in possession of ammunition by a prohibited person and violating his parole. He's being held on \$25,000.00 bail.



Adventist Health reports seeing more overdoses lately. 4 OD's reported in recent days. The emergency room at the hospital reports the overdoses were non-prescribed opiates or compromised forms of heroin/fentanyl, ecstasy, and cocaine. They're asking community members if you know anyone who may be at risk to call, as they have counselors available and they can connect folks with training and distribution of NARCAN in case of a suspected opioid overdose.

Governor Newsom vowing to fix the way the vaccines are being distributed. Newsom says instead of what we're doing right now to roll out the shots, the state will move to a system where age is your eligibility. But first front line workers, including health care workers, food and agriculture workers, teachers, emergency personnel and seniors 65 and older will get their shots. Counties are varying their approaches though which has been a challenge to a seamless rollout. Gov. Newsom said yesterday his administration is working to simplify and standardize the process so all eligible Californians are vaccinated in a timely fashion. He's launching a pilot program in a couple of large counties so residents get a notification when it's their turn. So far the state has administered over 2.4 million of 4.5 million doses

01/26/21 shipped.

The Gov has a plan for those who cannot afford their rent or their back rent when a moratorium went into place. The moratorium didn't call for rent or mortgages, for that matter, to be wiped. Now the Governor along with the two legislative leaders are promising to pay off as much as 80% of most people's unpaid rent. That's only if landlord's agree to wipe the other 20%. The legislature has to approve the plan because it will cost billions of dollars, but the money could come from federal relief dollars. It would also extend a law that's supposed to end next Monday, February 1st that bans landlords from evicting people as long as they pay at least 25% of their rent.

We're getting walloped winter storms lining up one behind the next. So Pacific Gas and Electric says customers should be prepared in case of weather-related power outages. They're not planning any public safety power shutoffs but their meteorologists are warning the storm series will be an atmospheric river-type event including widespread heavy rain, gusty winds, and heavy, low-elevation snow. The first in the series due this afternoon and the system will continue thru Thursday. PG&E says it will be across their service area, but mostly in the Sierra foothills. If you're in need of help for a weather related emergency, try calling 811.

The latest from the California Employment Development Department on scams that have plagued the agency along with a backlog of claims since the COVID-19 pandemic started. They're running investigations and Lake Co News reports in Lake County the state found cases of unemployment benefit fraud too. There have been tens of thousands of cases that add up to at least \$11 billion, even as high as \$30 billion. That includes money going to prison inmates and other countries. The California District Attorneys Association says there's "rampant and large-scale pandemic unemployment assistance fraud" and asked the Governor to get personally involved.

Since the state has lifted the regional stay at home orders it means both Lake and Mendocino, and more than 50 other counties across the state are back to the purple tier. After the Governor changed the state back to the Blueprint for a Safer Economy, many of the state's counties went to the strictest tier, but they can reopen outdoor dining and nail and hair salons. The change over the holidays was tied to ICU capacity. If a region was higher than 15% capacity they didn't need to close those services. Tier updates are provided today and every Tuesday. The Lake County Public Health Officer says the county will stay in the purple tier today and that northern counties have had fewer restrictions than the southern areas.

Governor Newsom has launched a new ten day plan to get the state's vaccination plan ironed out. At his press conference yesterday he said he'd be simplifying the way the vaccines are being distributed after all frontline healthcare workers get their shots. So far the state has been doling out over 40-100,000 vaccines/day. Thus far, the state has administered more than 2.4 million vaccines. The state is continuing through 65+, health care workers, and prioritize emergency services, food and agriculture workers, teachers and school staff. Then it's going to age-based eligibility, so the state can start to vaccinate a whole lot more people, a whole lot faster, something Newsom says will get the vaccine to disproportionately impacted communities.

School teachers and other staff fall below front line workers on the vaccine schedule and with changes being made to how the vaccinations are being rolled out it's a crap shoot as to when schools across the state will open. Education Source reports interviewing county schools' chiefs and district leaders shows major differences in how schools are getting their staff vaccinated. The Governor has agreed to get teachers up higher on the priority list. And the California Teachers Association is saying getting school staff vaccinated is important, along with mass testing and contact tracing, improved ventilation systems and cleaning school campuses. In Sonoma County they report vaccinating medical workers still and no school staff. It's up to local departments of public health to roll out the distribution of vaccines.

Congressman Mike Thompson working with a colleague from Pennsylvania so expensive technology is more accessible for some. The Access Technology Affordability Act sponsored by Thompson and Congressman Mike Kelly to help make sure those who are blind can get access to the high-cost access technology so they can get jobs. The bill will offer a refundable tax credit for blind individuals so they can purchase items like screen readers and Braille embossers not normally covered by insurance. Thompson says the bipartisan bill can help blind individuals remain competitive in the workforce.

More than a dozen parent groups joining forces to get kids back to in person learning. Open Schools Calif includes parents from Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego, Richmond and other cities who want their kids to go back to campuses across the state. They say distance learning is a disaster for most students. So they want Calif. to work harder on safety measures to allow campuses to reopen for in-person instruction. The group, had been several separate parent organizations. They say they found they'd have a bigger impact if they worked together and lobbied at a statewide level. They say the parent voice is missing in the work to reopen schools.

Info on one of the latest deaths from COVID19 in the county. The 36th death was that of a woman over 75. The Mendocino County Public Health Office says a 77 year old White woman from the Ukiah area died at a hospital. There's been 11 deaths the last month.

The owner of a gas station in Laytonville says someone drove off with the gas pump still in their car. Phil Gravier owns a Chevron station. He's reaching out to the public to find his missing pump after a customer took off with it still attached to their van. Surveillance footage shows a man in a white Chrysler Pacifica van with California plates get gas, then take off with the nozzle still firmly inside his gas tank. The owner posted on Facebook they were last seen headed north away from the gas station. He asks if anyone happens to see the pump on the side of the road to please be in touch.

Massive storm, loads of power outages, downed trees, crashed cars, flooding and debris flows. Like something out of a book, it's closed roads leading in and out of Mendocino County. The water flowing down the land left bare from massive fires last summer. The 101 at Laytonville is closed in both directions. The storm came down on Sonoma County around the burn scars left by the Walbridge, Glass and Meyers fires last year and the 2019 Kincadee fire. Residents have been warned they may have to evacuate as they're expecting unsafe conditions with the peak of the storm today. The National Weather Service has issued a flash flood watch for parts of the County affected by the Walbridge fire. Another warning for flooding around creeks and small streams with heavy rain. Heavy snow and falling trees were reported outside Laytonville last night, so the main route in and out of Humboldt County and the North Coast was closed off. There's also a high wind warning today in Sonoma County with the strongest winds expected to

01/27/21 come at a time of the heaviest rain.

Blizzard conditions expected in the Sierra Nevada and evacuations have been ordered around some parts of Northern Calif. The evacuation orders in Santa Cruz and San Mateo counties around the areas of the August Complex fire. There are also strike teams and task forces positioned in parts of the five counties where the fire burned over one million acres. Deputies were door knocking to get people out of their homes if there was no phone service or they had no way to get emergency notifications. Deputies also made people sign a refusal waiver if they wouldn't leave during the atmospheric river storm system. It hit the north bay first, then moved further south carrying debris like massive boulders, dirt, trees and more. There's also a rare blizzard warning for Lake Tahoe and a large area of the Sierra, with a possibility of up to 6 feet of snow dropping on upper elevations and winds faster than 100 mph over ridgetops.

The storm has come through Lake and Mendocino counties with heavy rain, snow and high winds, leaving some roads closed and homes and businesses in the dark. The winter storm warning is in effect still until this afternoon. Snow was reported from Clearlake to Clearlake Oaks, Cobb, Lakeport, Kelseyville and Upper Lake. Chains were needed on Highway 175 over Cobb, from Socrates Mine Road to Red Hills Road. And Caltrans had a snow plow out at the Glasgow Grade near Lower Lake as cars were stranded, stuck in the snow. Lake Co News reports around dinner time last night, there were up to 50 vehicles stuck there. There were also high wind speeds in the area, from 30-40 miles/hour in some areas. Reports there were also multiple cars stranded on both sides of the Lake last night at the Mendocino County line along Highway 20 west of Witter Springs Road. Heavy snow was forecasted thru this morning at the 1,500 to 2,500 foot elevation.

A woman from Ukiah is going to prison for an embezzlement scheme from her former employer. The Mendocino County DA's office reports 36 year old Sonia Lucia Lau will serve time at the Ukiah Jail for eight counts of stealing money while she was the bookkeeper for 15 years, since she was a teen. She'll serve 1 year behind bars as part of the Realignment sentence and another nearly 6 years on probation. The victim says Lau used the money on football games, wrestling matches, and a breast augmentation surgery. The victim says he was left with \$50,000 in credit card debt too. Lau will have to pay him \$1,000/month until she repays nearly \$205,000.

A bunch of car crashes reported in Mendocino County. As the rain and ice and in some cases heavy snow came down, cars became stranded or slid out. Reports of that and more in Brooktrails and on Highway 101. The highway had to be closed around Laytonville because of snowy conditions. Road closures reported on the 101 Willits Grade and Sherwood Rd in Brooktrails. The CHP reminding to drive slow and stay home if possible. You can check their website for reopenings and new closures as the storm is expected to peak midmorning today. There were several power outages also reported in Mendocino County last night. Check the PG&E website for exact outages, they've got a map posted there.

Reports of power outages in Covelo, Brooktrails, Willits, Laytonville and on the coast in Fort Bragg and Caspar. PG&E's website had hundreds listed without power in those areas. Power lines were also reported on the road in Willits. The PG&E website says the outage is due to the weather, something they had warned about earlier this week as their meteorologists forecasted heavy rain and high winds along with possible snow. As of last night around 7:30 the PG&E map had over 4,000 residents without power in Mendocino County. There was snow reported on Highway 175 between Mendocino and Lake County as well as the upper ridges of the Mayacama Mountains. Last night they were only allowing cars with chains thru Highway 175. The Mendocino County Sheriff posted on its Facebook page several times about dangerous road conditions and to drive slow and be mindful of the conditions or stay home if possible.

It's a no for new marijuana retailer in Fort Bragg. On Monday the city council said no to Brandy Moulton for her plan for a retail, manufacturing and plant-start microbusiness. The Advocate reports the council voted against the Planning Commission's decision to also deny Moulton's proposal to take over the former Floor Store building across from the Post Office and Purity Supermarket for Moulton's Sunshine Holistic. It's confusing though because the city council has to have 3 votes to overturn, and it was 2 to 1. There are five seats, one is vacant and the Vice Mayor recused herself for a conflict of interest. It had to be a unanimous 3 to 0 to overturn the planning commissions denial of the project. So it does not proceed. The newspaper reports Moulton already owns a dispensary outside Fort Bragg on Highway 1. She says she'll reapply.

The Fort Bragg City Council got some good news about their winter homeless shelter. There was a couple of weeks where the city was going to be without a shelter, but now the Mendocino Coast Jewish Community Shul in Caspar has agreed to provide space for the shelter for the final two weeks of March. Hospitality Center is hosting the shelter thru the local Lutheran Church, but the space was only available thru the middle of March. The mayor announced at the meeting this week that the Jewish Shul on the grounds of the Caspar Community Center will take over for the last part of the month.

The former chief of the police force in Willits is suing the city. Former Chief Alexis Blaylock was only in the position less than 2 months when she resigned. A press release back then said it was for personal reasons, something the city manager said she was sad about. But just after the resignation Blaylock said she hit roadblocks right away, but didn't say anything more than that because her, "professional ethics and standards of confidentiality" prevented her from speaking out. She is now suing for damages, something noted on a city council agenda a couple of weeks ago.

A Clean Streets campaign started several years ago in Willits brings in a haul of garbage. The Willits News reports after starting the project 12 years ago, Willits resident David Hatton is still at it, trying to rid the town of trash, one week at a time. The paper reports Hatton had an eight mile route, cleaning newspaper dispensers and collecting change, then noticed so much litter, he added that to his work. Hatton tells the paper he's found everything from cigarette butts, piles of whippit cartridges and discarded needles.

The Mendocino County Public Health Officer with a weekly report to the Board of Supervisors saying there are 18 people currently in the hospital. Earlier this week we reported 14, so that's quite a jump. Two people are in the ICU, it was just one in our same earlier report. But Dr. Andy Coren also says we appear to be flattening the curve from where we were two weeks ago. He says he's hopeful the decline will continue. There had been 35-40 cases a day, now it's down below 30 or so. Coren says most of the new cases are from gatherings, not wearing masks, not socially distancing and not frequently washing hands, and a few small outbreaks. Thankfully the outbreak at the Mendocino County Jail appears to be contained. There was however one new case Sunday.

In Lake County, the Public Health Officer Dr. Gary Pace reports the same, cases seem to be plateauing, but six out of 8 ICU beds were taken at local hospitals. The good news is the state's cases are also declining and the 14-day positivity rate was down since early January. Hospitalizations are also down, but the number of those dying is still increasing. There have been 32 deaths in Lake County, about 2/3rd's in the 70 years or older age group, another third 60 to 69 years of age, and 9 percent were under age 60. There's also apparently been more cases in kids, newborns to age 14. Dr. Pace announced to the board that some of the other strains have shown up in the county, something epidemiologists are keeping a close eye on.

Another emergency order to keep the public out of Lake County Superior Court due to COVID-19. The new emergency order extends until the end of February, due to a judicial emergency, allowed under state law. The California Supreme Court Chief has authorized the local court to extend statutory deadlines in criminal trials no more than 30 more days. So any jury trial that was supposed to start around this time, this month, will then start around the third week of February instead. It's now the sixth time there's been an emergency order requested by the Lake County Superior Court. Lake Co News reports trials stopped last March when the pandemic first surfaced, and they were held off until the end of summer when they restarted. Then again at the beginning of December after the fall surges of coronavirus started. These last orders lasting now for 3 months.

Nobody's talking much about this aspect of the pandemic... the loss of water for nonpayment of bills. A new report says the Governor did ban water disconnections during the pandemic, but bills started to pile up for many across the state. The report from the State Water Resources Control Board says unpaid water bills total \$1 billion and since people won't be able to pay them when the ban on disconnections stop, there could be a water debt crisis. The Governor spoke about it at his weekly press conference Monday, saying it's a critical issue which jeopardizes basic human needs during the disaster, including shelter from the virus, safe water to drink and the ability to wash hands.

A woman's been found dead from a gunshot wound in Upper Lake. The Lake County Sheriff's Dept says they got a call after 5:30 pm last night to reports of a gunshot victim and found the woman, already dead. They say witnesses told them 56 year old Christine Mora was shot to death by her 35 year old stepson, Matthew who had run from the scene before deputies arrived. Witnesses say Matthew Mora was drunk and arguing with family members at their house when he shot Christine. He's been arrested and is held on one million dollars bail, an amount generally used for murder suspects.

Mendocino County Public Health and Adventist Health are working with local community health clinics to get residents vaccinated. The partnership reports inoculating over 2,400 residents including 570 in Boonville at the Anderson Valley Health Center. 30 at the Baechtel Creek Medical Clinic in Willits and in North County, 220 people got their vaccines at Long Valley Health Center. And on the coast, Mendocino Coast Clinics (MCC) vaccinated 675 people and Redwood Coast Medical Services vaccinated 905. They've been giving the shots first to healthcare workers, people 75 and older, and people in essential job sectors such as education, childcare, emergency services, and food and agriculture.

The Mendocino County Sheriff's Office reporting a phone scam with someone pretending to be from US Customs. The Sheriff's Dept. has put out a statement assuring the public it is not a true call and that someone is just pretending to be a Customs Agent saying they intercepted a package filled with drugs and need a return call. The Sheriff reminds not to call back or talk to whoever it is and to report the activity to them or your local law enforcement agency. They remind also not to give any personal info out including banking info or social security numbers, credit card info or your home or business address.

01/28/21

The 101 outside Laytonville that had been closed due to the punishing winter rain and snow is fully reopened. The work was ongoing to get the road reopened yesterday with no estimate as to when it would reopen, then suddenly an announcement on the Caltrans District 1 social media pages with pictures before and after. It showed a large tree down and massive, big rig behind it. It had been closed in Mendocino County from Cummings to Reynolds Highway, north of Willits because of stranded and stuck big rigs and cars, and downed power lines and trees on the highway. They reported crews had been out working to remove those trees and get vehicles towed from the area at the same time utility companies would be repairing the fallen power lines. They added that they appreciated the public's patience.

A gun fired and law enforcement out and about trying to find out where in Ukiah the shooter went after someone was hit in the leg. It happened yesterday in the Safeway parking lot, police responded to someone with a wounded leg and a scanner report that a suspect took off toward Gobbi Street. Surveillance footage was being checked out from a nearby business.

The Lake County Continuum of Care has received a grant to make more emergency help available during the pandemic. Their 630k Emergency Solutions Grant comes from the CARES Act to prevent, prepare for, and respond to individuals and families experiencing homelessness or getting homeless assistance in the county and are at risk due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The money can go for various purposes like outreach on the street, prevention services, and emergency shelter for prevention, preparation and response to the virus, housing vouchers, rapid re-housing programs, eviction prevention, and housing relocation. Recipients can also use the money on training on infectious disease prevention and mitigation and for hazard pay for staff working directly to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus in those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

A man from Fort Bragg has been arrested for resisting arrest with violence. The Sheriff's Office reports Alexander Ramirez was seen drunk and yelling at a restaurant. Workers there say he wouldn't leave and laid in the road. When approached by a deputy, they say he took a fighting stance, the deputy overpowered the man and arrested him. He also found he was on parole. Deputies say he continued making verbal threats. He was taken to a hospital first to be checked out, then off to jail he went where he was held on \$30,000.00 bail.

A man in Gualala's been arrested for a burglary and looting. Deputies say Santiago Amado Castro-Rossi of Vallejo was connected to a rip off at Pacific Woods Glass. His car was seen in the area and connected to him. They found it later about a mile from the business with Castro-Rossi nearby. They say he had a bunch of construction tools in the rear of the vehicle. And when they searched they found items the Glass company reported stolen that were valued at \$6,000.00. Not only that, they found a loaded gun, heroin, Xanax and possible fentanyl. He's arrested for Burglary, Possession of Stolen Property, Looting During a State of Emergency, Possession of a Firearm by a Prohibited Person and Possession of Ammunition by a Prohibited Person and because of the pandemic, he was originally not going to be held in jail because they're non-violent crimes, but a judge reversed it and ordered \$50,000.00 bail.

The Russian River gets close to flooding in Jenner as high surf closed the mouth of the river. It's forecasted to reach 10 feet today and 12 feet by tomorrow unless it breaches. A Sonoma Water spokesman says they don't think the sand there will be stable enough for heavy equipment and personnel to be on the beach so they can mechanically breach the sandy berm across the mouth. Apparently it's not the first time this winter this has happened at the mouth of the river as the water level rises. The water yesterday reportedly pretty close to the Jenner Visitor Center, which floods at 10.3 feet. The visitor center did flood this month already, but just the parking lot, then the berm gave way.

No offshore oil leases being allowed in Calif. per the Biden Administration. They've placed a temporary shield on expanding oil development which was allowed under the Trump administration as of two years ago. The new executive order by President Biden says new oil and natural gas leases on public lands and offshore waters must await comprehensive review by "multiple federal agencies". Congressman Jared Huffman has also announced he would introduce two measures to permanently protect the West Coast and the Arctic from any new oil or gas leases. Huffman is an environmental attorney by trade.

Mendocino County is hosting more vaccination clinics, this time for in-home support service workers, in Ukiah and at Mendocino High. These are the first doses for this group. They'll also inoculate some who got their first Moderna doses January 4th and 7th. That's happening next Wednesday at the Redwood Empire Fairgrounds from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm.

A democratic lawmaker from San Francisco says he wants black bear hunting banned. State Sen. Scott Wiener introduced "The Bear Protection Act" which is sponsored by the Humane Society of the United States to ban the sport hunting season. The bill would however allow bears to be killed with a permit if it's to protect public safety, livestock and for scientific research. Wiener says the animals have faced "unprecedented habitat loss due to climate change and wildfires, and continued sport hunting in California makes survival an even tougher climb". He says public opinion polls have shown support for such a move. But the animal's population has been climbing in recent years and hunters have not been hitting their quotas because of new rules about hunting with hounds. Supporters of the hunt say it'll deprive the state of revenue from hunting permits. Last year the state made almost 1.4 million on the hunt.

A police officer from Ukiah's may be arrested for allegedly going into a woman's hotel room and sexually attacking her. The Mendocino County District Attorney's Office reports charging Kevin Murray with burglary, sexual battery and possession of meth for an incident at the Super 8 Motel on South Orchard Avenue last November. Charging papers say he went into the hotel room twice. He's been placed on administrative leave for nearly two months. The police department reports the City of Ukiah and the Ukiah Police Department are supporting and cooperating with the criminal investigation and conducting its own administrative review. No word so far if the officer has been arrested and booked into jail.

The Board of Supervisors talking about the pandemic and the use of Measure B mental health funds. The Daily Journal reports that Chair Dan Gjerde commented about the insurrection and attempts to overturn the election and says he's grateful that in Mendocino County, it's "nothing like what we saw in D.C." he added he's hopeful the we can all come together as a country, something not seen in recent years. Then the board got down to the business of hearing from the Public Health Officer Dr. Andrew Coren with good news that the holiday surge looked to be plateauing, but there are new strains of the virus being monitored. He didn't say if any had surfaced locally, but they have in Lake County. The board also got an update on Measure B from its Oversight Committee, but their report and the money left in their fund is apparently not up to date. That info has to be submitted to the board 2 weeks before any discussion due to the Brown Act. So a current report will be provided at the next Mental Health Treatment Act Citizen's Oversight Committee meeting.

The Fort Bragg City Council had to cut their meeting short due to a staff emergency, just as Waste Management was asking for a new one year contract. The Advocate reports a representative of Waste Management offered a new one year contract last night and asked the city not switch to a new provider saying they would not raise their rates. They also noted they were confused when hearing the city was interested in making a switch over to C&S Waste Solutions. There was also public comment on the matter before the meeting was cut short. No action was taken.



In Sonoma County they're still seeing frequent coronavirus related deaths even though case numbers are going down. The Press Democrat reports health officials said Tuesday 9 people died and more than 25% of the total deaths occurred in January. Health officials say this month has been the deadliest for the virus after the holiday surge in cases. The latest deaths were between Jan. 4 and Jan. 25th and were in five women and four men who were in local hospitals. Six of them were over 64 years old and three between the ages of 50 and 64. Five of the nine had been residents of skilled nursing or residential care facilities. The county is still expecting the deaths to continue next month. So far the county has had just under 26,000 cases of COVID.

01/29/21

A California inmate firefighter who was injured, then placed in federal immigration detention, has been released. 39 year old Bounchan Keola got hit by a tree while fighting a fire last October outside of Redding. He saw his parents and sister yesterday for the first time since he was arrested as a teen. He was released from prison a couple weeks after his injury, but scooped up by customs agents. He was released from detention Wednesday because of a court case that said detainees are not allowed to be held indefinitely if they can't be deported and if they're not dangerous or a flight risk. Keola is also a legal resident because his parents left Laos when he was 2. Federal law says he could be deported though because he had criminal convictions, murder, manslaughter and assault with a firearm related to a gang-related shooting when he was 16.

If you haven't signed up for health insurance this year, you're in luck, as Covered California is extending enrollment. Open enrollment ends this Sunday, but there will be a special enrollment beginning Monday and lasting thru May 15 as part of the Affordable Care Act... or Obamacare. The act started the health insurance marketplaces along with federal subsidies for some who can't afford health insurance. Calif. runs its own marketplace, while the federal government runs many other state marketplaces. Covered California reports there are as many as 2.7 million Californians without health insurance, and 1.2 million are either eligible for subsidies or qualify for Medicaid.

A new report says the state unemployment dept. knew about possible scams but didn't do anything to stop it. The Calif. State Auditor's office says the agency did nothing for four months which cost taxpayers nearly 10 and half billion dollars. Auditor Elaine Howle's investigation found there had been as many as 1,000 curious claims/day over the first few months of the pandemic, but the department only had a couple of people who were reviewing the reports and stopping the payments, so many slipped through the cracks, until last July. But there were still bogus payments being made. The agency was found to be sending claims repeatedly to the same addresses and did nothing. Some of the fraudulent claims were being sent just last month. Governor Newsom and agency officials have blamed the fraud on the federal government, but the governor's office also says it's unacceptable and they've set up a fraud task force at Office of Emergency Services who are working with local and federal law enforcement.

Calif. State Parks are starting to allow camping since the stay at home order has been lifted across the state. But it's only for folks who had reservations already. The department is phasing in camping at state sites and will be posting each opening on the state's social media sites, their website and individual camps websites too. They are also starting to take reservations again for those who were canceled on, but note that demand is sometimes higher than what's available. They remind, we are still in the midst of the pandemic and visitors should stay local and plan ahead, to wear a face covering, practice physical distancing and avoid gatherings with people outside your immediate household.

Police say a porch pirate has hit Ukiah. Last Sunday a resident on the city's west side reported there had been a package on their porch for less than an hour. They have one of those Ring surveillance cameras and it caught someone swiping the package on Clara Avenue between Myron and Joseph Street. The camera caught whoever took the package, something the resident joked was sage and melatonin. The person in the video is described as possible being a teenage male between 15-18, wearing a gray hat, gray/black jacket, blue denim jeans, and a black backpack.

Unemployment claims are down for the first time in nearly a year. The first time claims since the pandemic started last March were way under 100,000, to 53,300. The week before was more than 2 times that much. This latest week the lowest since March 7th the final week before the statewide shutdown due to the pandemic. Across the country though there were 847,000 initial unemployment claims filed last week. It too was down. The last filing was 914,000 first time claims.

The former mayor of Ukiah has been chosen to finish the term of a board supervisor who had been on the council before the last election. Last night the City Council voted for Mari Rodin to take now Mendocino supervisor Maureen Mulheren's seat. Rodin had been on the council from 2002 to 2013 and she's been the mayor twice. The current Mayor Juan Orozco seconded a motion by Vice Mayor Jim Brown to appoint Rodin, there was one dissenting vote. Rodin also actually ran against Mulheren to get onto the board but was diagnosed with cancer and canceled a town hall. She kept going in the race anyway, but only won 35% of the vote. There were eight applications for the seat.

It doesn't appear that schools will reopen as soon as the Governor had been hoping. Education Source reports it's increasingly unlikely there will be a February or March reopening. After a couple of hearings on the matter, lawmakers heard complaints a Feb. 1st deadline was unrealistic and should be pushed back. That's this Monday. The Senate Education Committee heard from various school administration officials last week at the hearing. And the news site reports it doesn't look like the legislature will approve of the \$2 billion the state wants to give to school districts to meet Gov. Newsom's timeline and conditions.

The California Legislature has given the thumbs up for the first Black secretary of state. The secretary of state Alex Padilla was chosen by the Governor to take Vice President Kamala Harris' senate seat. The Senate Pro Tem says Assemblywoman Shirley Weber "is the right person" to fill the position after Weber won the nomination from the senate. A 29-0 vote. Republicans did not vote. The Assembly had approved her nomination a day earlier. The Governor appointed Weber at the same time the senate also approved extending the universal vote-by-mail system for one more year.

The storm that powered through Northern California could be a way out of a drought, but also left some damage behind. The atmospheric river caused tons of car accidents, closed down the 101 in Mendocino County because of stranded vehicles and downed trees and is now in Southern Calif. where it threatens floods and mudslides near areas left bare from wildfires. The National Weather Service has issued flood advisories for all of Los Angeles County, where about 10 million residents reside, and flash flood watches for wildfire-scarred areas in Orange and San Diego counties. The state was in a drought for months which didn't help stop wildfires last summer which burned over 4.2 million acres, the most in recorded modern history.

Several hundred million dollars from the federal government's CARES act will indeed go to help some Californians pay off some back owed rent. The legislature has approved a plan for the state to use the stimulus money to pay up to 80% of some tenants' unpaid rent but their landlord have to agree to write off the rest of the debt. Gov. Newsom helped negotiate the deal which he's expected to sign into law. So \$2.6 billion of the federal package will go to urgent assistance for renters.

The Mendocino County Public Health Officer has put out a new health order regarding the reopening of schools for K-6th grade. Dr. Andy Coren says schools can start the process of re-opening since case numbers are flattening, the community has been heeding the warnings to avoid gatherings, wear masks, and maintain social distance. The county is in the purple tier currently. So Dr. Coren says with the help of the Office of Education, Mendocino County school districts, schools, teachers, staff, parents, community partners, rural clinics and Adventist Health, kids can start to come back. But that doesn't mean it's going to happen fast. The schools will take it from here after they come up with their plans. There could be only some grades that get back now, and only certain days of the week for some and other days for others right away. Dr. Coren says they're "respectfully ask for the community's patience" and to refer to their fact sheet, where you should be able to find all of the info you need, posted on

02/01/21

the county's website and through social media. The Lake County Public Health Officer says COVID19 cases are slowing. The rate is 61 per 100,000 people, higher than Mendocino County. Dr. Gary Pace says the test positivity rate is down at 12.2% and hospitals are not as full as they have been over the last several weeks. The county is in the State's Purple Tier, so only outdoor dining is permitted at restaurants. The Governor changed the state back to the colored system for reopening businesses last week. The county received 800 doses of the vaccine last week. up from 300-400 in recent weeks. Another shipment of 800 more doses are expected this week too. So far, the public health office reports 3,500 Lake County residents have been vaccinated.

The Ukiah Schools Superintendent says they've submitted their reopening plan to the Public Health Office and the state. There's a tentative reopening date set for Tuesday, February 16th. The Superintendent says it's contingent on local health conditions and the COVID Safety Plan approved, which we should know within about a week. The school district has had three town halls, including one entirely in Spanish. There are links to them at the district website on the hybrid model plan, health and safety protocols, mitigation, testing, and more. There are more virtual information sessions planned from individual schools detailing their in person plans.

A man in Lake County has been arrested after a patrol officer stopped him for some traffic violations. A deputy patrolling the Nice area stopped a gray Dodge Charger finding four people inside, one of them Shannon Henson of Spring Valley was on Post Release Community Supervision so they searched the car and found a couple syringes with something clear inside them, a baggie full of suspected meth, and a disassembled assault rifle and 35 rounds of ammo. He was arrested for several crimes including felon in possession of a firearm, felon in possession of ammunition, possession of an assault rifle and possession of a controlled substance for sale. The man has a long history of narcotics, stolen property, and firearms crimes; he's held on no bail. The other three people were released.

A man from Covelo in prison, then taken to a hospital to be treated and died there. The Sheriff's office reports 53 year old Ransome Anderson was arrested a year ago and awaiting sentencing on three cases including felony driving under the influence of alcohol with injury or death, assault with a deadly weapon and committing a felony while out on bail or own recognizance. He was taken to the hospital a few weeks ago and apparently it was found he had an advanced preexisting medical condition that was probably terminal. Anderson remained at the hospital for treatment until his death.

Threats of violence and death against Governor Newsom and his businesses. The Sacramento Bee newspaper reports they got voicemails and emails that had graphic abusive language about Newsom, violent sexual threats against his wife and a reference to his children. The newspaper reported one of the threats related to burning down wineries owned by his company. There have also been threats to recall the governor because of the way he has been handling the pandemic. There were also fake news rumors online about Newsom supposedly taking coronavirus aid money for his own businesses from the state, in fact his company, which he is no longer involved with got money from the federal government, not California.

Several hundred people without power for several days after the major storm plowed thru Northern and Central Calif. last week. On Friday Pacific Gas and Electric Co. crews were still out repairing equipment and restoring service. They had warned some they might not have power until today, a week later. 95 percent of residences and businesses without power because of strong winds, heavy rains and deep snow were restored by Friday, but there were still people in Lake, Mendocino, Calaveras, Tuolumne, Yolo, Amador and Humboldt counties in the dark over the weekend. The company reported 1,500 instances of damaged equipment that had to be either replaced or repaired.

California is working to protect those who live at elder residence facilities or nursing homes. The state Attorney General Xavier Becerra announced his office's Bureau of Medi-Cal Fraud and Elder Abuse was getting its own division that will be able to tap into more resources so they can do their own investigating and prosecuting fraud committed against the Medi-Cal program and physical or financial abuse or neglect against older folks and their dependents in care facilities statewide.

Congressman Mike Thompson and 3 of his colleagues are working on a bipartisan small business package during the pandemic. The Ways and Means Select Revenue Measures Subcommittee, for which Thompson is the Chairman, introduced the Keeping the Lights on Act. The bill will give help to businesses with essential fixed costs, like help paying their rent or utilities, during the Coronavirus pandemic. They're using the tax code to help their effort, giving them a tax credit as small businesses across the country continue struggling due to the pandemic.

A Ukiah Police Officer accused of serious sexual misconduct has been fired. Police Chief Justin Wyatt spoke on Facebook saying that officer Kevin Murray was immediately put on leave when they heard about the allegations. After an internal investigation, Wyatt says, they expelled Murray. He says there's no room for this kind of behavior and Murray's actions do not reflect on other members of the Ukiah police force. Still no word if Murray's been arrested by his former force. He's charged though with burglary, sexual battery and possession of meth for an incident at the Super 8 Motel on South Orchard Avenue last November. He was placed on administrative leave for nearly two months.

The city council in Lakeport wants to hear from the public on how to use money the city is trying through a grant program to help residents in the face of the pandemic. The meeting tomorrow night on zoom. There will be other business handled at the meeting, but they will spend the majority of the 6pm meeting on the Community Development Block Grant Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act. The council's poised to give the green light for spending the money with the help of the public. To be clear they're applying for grants due to COVID impacts which includes money for households where people are at risk of going without shelter, health and education support services; public facility and infrastructure improvements; public facility acquisition, emergency shelters and other housing assistance, also how to help businesses either retain or get new employees.

Apparently, the Unemployment Dept. has finally caught up to the backlog of first time claims since the pandemic started. The state Employment Development Department reports finally making its way through nearly 20 million unemployment benefit claims, saying they've resolved 99.9 percent of 1.6 million backlogged claims that a Strike Team found last September. They report it takes about 3 weeks to get the first check out or disqualify the claim. The agency says it'll continue giving weekly updates on how many claims they've processed and any issues beyond the usual payment delays over 21 days.

The vaccine is on hold in Sonoma County. The county's Office of Education was supposed to be administering local school employees with 1,100 doses of the Moderna vaccine yesterday, but the county's 40 individual school districts and some private preschool providers, private schools, charter schools and colleges heard they were not getting the vaccines. Calls went out and 500 appointments were made by Friday. Then county officials rescinded the allotted doses for educators and others because self-serve appointments for the 75 and older group were being filled by others not in that age group. The county's calling it a miscommunication. The Press Democrat reports it follows Mendocino County's Public Health Office announcing schools can reopen and Ukiah has a target date to get back to in person learning, something Sonoma County can't do now if they're not vaccinating school staff. The Public Health Office says those the worst off should get doses first and the county's vaccine chief says schools will get a

02/02/21 delayed allotment of 1,100 doses in two weeks.

The pressure's on for schools to reopen in Calif. The Governor reportedly telling school officials to "pack it up" if they don't restart in-person classes soon. But teacher's unions are fighting back saying their members don't want to come back to school before they get a vaccine. There is some in person learning elsewhere in the country, but in California, most schools remain closed, almost a year after the pandemic started. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention had a study out recently showing little evidence of spread at schools if proper precautions are taken, like mask wearing, physical distancing and proper ventilation. The Gov. says he won't force public schools to reopen and proposed a massive plan to reopen but superintendents, unions and lawmakers aren't biting.

The California Attorney General's Office is reportedly supportive of a lawsuit against a major new south Lake County resort and residential development. Lake Co News reports the Atty. General has filed a motion to intervene in a lawsuit against the county's approval and certification of an environmental impact report for the Guenoc Valley Mixed Use Planned Development Project, or Maha Guenoc Valley. The company Lotusland Investment Holdings has proposed a 16,000-acre project near Middletown. It would include 1,400 new homes, multiple hotels and almost 1,000 resort and hotel rooms.

State Sen. Mike McGuire says he's got a way to get the ailing travel and hospitality industry back. He and his co-author Assemblymember Sharon Quirk-Silva have introduced a bill to earmark \$45 million for Visit California. The money would pay for a massive media and jobs recovery campaign so people come to Calif. for vacation or business travel. It would help boost the hard hit industry including restaurants, hotels, and local destinations. The money would be poured into newspapers and broadcast media, which have agreed to match the funds from the state. McGuire says the coronavirus pandemic has had a devastating impact on so many Californians, and "some of the hardest hit are those 600,000 employees who lost their hospitality jobs".

Several people have applied for one open seat on the Fort Bragg City Council. After former mayor William Lee left a seat open, nine people have applied. That means the city council will hold a special meeting tonight for public interviews for the nine. Someone has to be appointed by the end of March for the rest of a two year term. Town Hall is closed due to the COVID19 pandemic, so a special meeting's on Zoom. The invite's included in the City Council Agenda for which you can sign up to be notified about.

The Governor is asking Blue Shield of California to help with the massive task of vaccinating Californians. The nonprofit insurer has been approved with an emergency authorization, which cuts red tape with a lengthy and customary bidding process. Kaiser Permanente, the state's largest health plan, is going to manage the effort and give any extra help. Blue Shield will put together a statewide vaccination network. The California Health and Human Services agency reported the change as the vaccination rollout has been something of a mish mash of county to county fending for themselves and no centralized system to manage the distribution.

The Ukiah High School Principal speaking to the Daily Journal says as kids continue to do distance learning there have been three issues, covering curriculum, engaging students, and caring for social and emotional health. Principal Gordon Oslund tells the paper it's been hard for teachers too, using new ways to teach, but he says it's getting smoother after feedback. But he says there are still students who don't participate, turning their cameras off. He says many teachers have had issues with kids turning their cameras off, so they don't know if the students understands what they're presenting. They've started a new program though so students get free counseling during lunch period to make sure their emotional health is also being tended to.

The yearly point in time count in Lake County looked different, but organizers say more surveys were turned in this year. Because of inclement weather and the pandemic, they used digital surveys for the first time. The Point-in-Time (PIT) Count is required by the federal government and has to be done in the last part of January to count sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness. The chair of this year's count says they won't be totally done for several more weeks, but nearly 500 surveys were done by last week and they thought they'd get more too. So far it showed the county had 386 unsheltered and 200 homeless sheltered people. Last year there were 332 people were surveyed.

The state agency that oversees workplace safety, Cal OSHA is reportedly understaffed and apparently undercounting how many people across the state have gotten seriously ill or died because they got coronavirus as a result of their work or while on the job. Only 1,600 serious worker illnesses or deaths have been reported to the Division of Occupational Safety and Health since the start of the pandemic until the middle of last December. And only 779 of serious or deadly infections were contracted in the workplace. That's out of more than 3 million people who have tested positive in California. It also only makes up less than 2% of over 41,000 who've died. The agency goes by employers reporting workplace infections, something lawmakers and health officials say is problematic in getting to the real count and the real risk from on the job infections.

Cal Osha has fined the Alameda County Sheriff for COVID violations after a deputy died. The \$2,440 fine is for four non-serious violations. It doesn't have the deputy's name on the citation. It was Deputy Oscar Rocha who died after contracting the virus at the Santa Rita Jail. There was an investigation two days later, last July, and the fine was imposed last month. The Sheriff Dept. has since started a COVID Compliance Unit after being sued by a civil rights company advocating for better mental health and health care at the jail and the sheriff's office. There's a consultant on the case too, they were hired after the lawsuit was filed and reportedly found some COVID-related problems at the jail, but says the Sheriff's Office is improving its coronavirus-related safety protocols.

The Board of Supervisors Cannabis Cultivation Ad Hoc Committee is having an online town hall. The two Mendocino Supervisors John Haschak and Ted Williams are hosting the meeting a week from tomorrow at 4pm Zoom. They'll be discussing working with the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) on the State's requirement for site-specific California Environment Quality Act (CEQA) review so that applicants can become eligible for a State Annual Cannabis Cultivation License.

**How to attend:**

To join via Zoom, click the link: <https://mendocinocounty.zoom.us/j/88027314>.

To join via phone, dial: +1 669 900 9128 and enter the webinar ID: 880 2731

The webinar will also be streaming live on the County's YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/mendocinocountyvideo>) and the County's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/mendocinocounty/>).

For more information, please contact Mendocino County Planning and Building Services Cannabis Program at (707) 234-6680.

More info on the death of an inmate from Mendocino County. We reported early this week that 53 year old Ransome Anderson was being treated at an area hospital for some sort of terminal illness after being arrested a year ago. Anderson is now on the COVID19 dashboard in the county as a statistic. His death, one of the county's 39 due to the pandemic. Last Sunday morning the Sheriff's Office was reportedly notified Anderson had died. He had been awaiting sentencing for three cases on charges including felony driving under the influence of alcohol with injury or death, assault with a deadly weapon, felony failure to appear, and committing a felony while out on bail or own recognizance. He ended up in the hospital January 11th and it was found he had some sort of terminal pre-existing condition besides

02/03/21 coronavirus.

21 more cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed in Mendocino County. The Public Health Officer has said the cases are plateauing. But so far there's been almost 3,500 total cases. We also see another death on the dashboard. This one, only noted as being from the North Coast. There's a testing site set up for the weekend in Covelo. Free tests, that are first come first serve with no appointment necessary, Sat. from 2-5pm. 24281 Riffe Rd, Covelo.

There are still several hundred people without power over a week after a snowstorm in Mendocino County. Pacific Gas and Electric reported yesterday about 1,000 without power since the January 26th winter storm. There were 10,000 though. The utility company still had several thousand in the dark last weekend, but on Monday reported more than half of those were restored. But still people in Willits, Laytonville, Cummings and Leggett were still affected. They were supposed to get their power back on last night, but there are still reports of hundreds in seriously damaged areas in the dark. It could take until Thursday for everyone to have their power restored. Those without power over 48 hours may qualify for Storm Inconvenience Payments from the utility, check their website for more info.

A deputy in the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office is being investigated after his report on a church service violating public health guidelines conflicted with reports by county code enforcement officials and The Press Democrat. The newspaper reports the county's Independent Office of Law Enforcement Review & Outreach tipped the Sheriff's Office to a couple of complaints Monday regarding the Spring Hills Church. It showed differences in what Deputy Aziz Atallah reported and shows possible lies or at least a conflict of interest and selective enforcement of the county's health order. He went to the church January 24th because of possible indoor services and no masks. But reported none of that. But it was otherwise documented that there were 130 people, many without masks primarily indoors. An investigation has been launched.



The Lake County Board of Supervisors has agreed to continue online meeting only because of the pandemic. There had been a hybrid set up last year allowing some in person attendees. But since the holiday gatherings and travel led to a surge, the board had voted to do only virtual and closed its chambers. Yesterday at their meeting, after the public health officer, Dr. Gary Pace's weekly address, the board decided to continue the closure. But some board members were concerned some who wanted to participate didn't have good enough internet access. But residents can watch outside the courthouse if that's the case or visit a library to watch on a Chromebook and get Wi-Fi access there in the parking lot. The board also discussed that one of the mutant strains of COVID19 has been detected in the county.

Congressman Mike Thompson working with a colleague from Washington have introduced a bill so folks who move can keep their phone number. Thompson and Rep. Dan Newhouse introduced the bipartisan PHONE Act so that survivors of natural disasters who lost their homes can retain the same phone number as they rebuild. This is for landlines, because they have to be disconnected sometimes and if it goes on too long, the phone number can go back into a pool for someone else to get. The bill was actually introduced over two years ago after some of Thompson's constituents lost their homes in the Atlas and Tubbs fires in the firestorm of October 2017. If it passes it would mean an automatic freezing for one year on the number, an option to extend another year.

A year has passed since the start of the pandemic. It arose around this time last year, but kids were in school. The state closed businesses and schools last March, and the Gov. set a timeline of February 1st for back in person, along with a steep price tag to get school districts to submit reopening plans. That was supposed to happen this week so the youngest students could land back at campuses by Feb. 16th. But the Governor has received negative marks from lawmakers, larger school districts and teachers unions. The California Teachers Association wants staff to get a vaccine before students return to school, but it could take until summer, just to get thru the current tier. The Gov. said last week if everyone has to be vaccinated, there will be no in person instruction. And some schools can't do social distancing the way the plan goes, so they're holding off too.

The Ukiah City Council's considering a plan at their meeting to get hundreds of thousands to respond to the pandemic. The Daily Journal reports the council is trying to get Community Development Block Grants for payments for low- to moderate-income residential tenants and homeowners; more money to install a permanent generator at the Ukiah Valley Conference Center, because they already got some and want the center to be a back-up vaccination clinic; and finally for a new ambulance for the Ukiah Valley Fire Authority since they're pretty much operating 24/7 during the pandemic.

A local business owner and councilwoman has organized a cleanup in the Brooktrails area. It happened a couple of weeks ago and around 30 people showed up to assist councilwoman Greta Kanne. She said she organized the cleanup of Sherwood Road before and this year as part of the Adopt-a-Road program, the group secured safety vests, pickers and trash bags. They reportedly pulled about 40 large trash bags worth of garbage. There were a couple of Sheriff's deputies patrolling the area at the same time and a California Highway Patrol vehicle watching as the litter was gathered.

A new survey shows people aren't really supporting the work of the Governor, who's the subject of a recall effort. The Berkeley Institute of Governmental Studies surveyed over 10,000 registered voters last week. Only 46% approved of Gov. Newsom's job and 48% disapprove. Last fall a survey found a 64% approval rating. But the cases of coronavirus have surged since then and stricter lockdowns have been ordered by the Gov. Then there was that infamous dinner at the French Laundry indoors, and maskless. The co-director of the Institute of Governmental Studies says it should be a strong warning to Newsom and if the recall moves forward, the response to the pandemic needs to be seen as more successful.

The state has administered almost 3,650,000 COVID19 vaccinations. It's been about three weeks since the state started inoculating front line workers and those over 65. As of yesterday the state's public health office reported getting 5.78 million doses which were distributed to hospital systems and local health offices. The CDC's public records show Calif. has given about 83% of the first doses its received to just under 3 million people. The state ranked 15th lowest among the 50 states and Washington DC. The state's about to get another allocation though, nearly 30,000 Moderna doses over the last allotment.

A man from Windsor's been arrested for having tear gas as a convicted felon. Sheriff's Deputies say they got a call just before 1 this morning finding Joseph Grant in the 1300 block of North State Street in Ukiah. Deputies knew him from previous contact and knew he had a warrant out for his arrest. They arrested him without incident. He's held on \$15,000.00 bail.

The Save Our Swans Clear Lake Society is reporting the mute swans seen on Clear Lake are here to stay, for now. The Department of Fish and Wildlife is trying to get rid of the population of swans on the lake, calling them an invasive species. They're trying to eradicate 25 swans who've lived on the lake for almost 16 years, forming a coalition, including the Clearlake Audubon Society, to get the Board of Supervisors on board with the eradication. So far the board has voted against killing the swans. Public support for allowing the birds to stay also reportedly swayed the board. And through all of this the Save Our Swans Clear Lake Society was also born.

Adventist Health has a new notification system to tell people when it's their turn to get the COVID19 vaccine. It's thru email notification, you can sign up for it and the hospital will then email when you can attend a vaccination clinic somewhere in the county. The president for Adventist Health in Mendocino County says they realize the need in the community to circulate accurate and timely info about where and how to get the vaccine. They've already been having mass vaccination events across the county, administering more than 5,000 vaccines since December 18. Right now they say they're focusing on those 75 and older. Proof of age and ID are required for those getting vaccinated.

A teenager from Guerneville whose was found dead in the back seat of a car after a minor DUI crash last December probably died from an overdose. That's the word from police who reported to the scene of the crash. There they found 14 year old Yadhira Carrillo Guzman unresponsive in the back seat of a crashed car. Her 16-year-old friend's Toyota Camry had been involved in a hit and run crash. The 14 year old was found unconscious and she wasn't breathing. They could not revive her. The Sonoma County Coroner's office says the death investigation is not over, but toxicology results showed booze and fentanyl in Carrillo Guzman's system. Now the investigation begins into how she got a hold of such powerful drugs. The

02/04/21 teen driver was arrested on suspicion of misdemeanor DUI and hit-and-run.

One of the managers of the state's office on AIDS is accused of embezzling \$2 million from the agency that fights the disease. 45 year old Schenelle Flores of Sacramento has pleaded not guilty to wire fraud. She's accused of working with up to five others, moving money out of the Department of Public Health for the Office of AIDS. She apparently worked for a company with a state contract. She's accused of "false statements, representations, promises and half-truths" for using corporate expense money for gift cards the agency used as patient incentives, and debit cards for personal purchases, like tickets to sports games, concert tickets, travel and payments to family and friends. She faces up to 20 years in federal prison and a fine of \$250,000.

A public hearing's been held on the massive unemployment fraud in the state. Lawmakers questioning top officials from the Governor's administration about why legitimate claims were somehow blocked, but billions of dollars went to fraudsters. The public hearing was held yesterday after two audits of the unemployment agency. Some of the testimony included people needing to live in their cars during the pandemic because they never had their claims paid. The department head promised lawmakers they'd be prepared moving forward, but not a whole lot more. The Employment Development Department has processed over 19 million claims and paid more than \$114 billion in benefits since the pandemic started, a large chunk paid out to scammers.

A press conference is being held by the Mendocino County Sheriff on a missing persons case. Sheriff Matt Kendall and the FBI are jointly hosting the "Facebook Live" event tomorrow morning at 11:30 A.M. regarding the disappearance of Khadijah Britton of the Round Valley Indian Tribes. Khadijah vanished three years ago from Covelo. There have been numerous searches for her. Her family says she was last seen being shoved into a car by her former boyfriend Neggie Fallis. There's a \$10,000 reward leading to any information in the case. The Sheriff says the investigation is still active and unsolved. They plan to update the public on the latest info in the cold case. They will take questions even though it's a livestream event.

The Lake County Public Health Office says they're starting to take vaccination appointments for those 65 or older. They have a limited vaccine supply so they will have few appointments, but say they will be getting more vaccines soon and will ramp up the appointment availability soon. You can make an appointment online at the public health department's website or call. But they say not to call if you see on the website that all the appointments have been filled. They will be checking ID's and say please not to make an appointment unless you meet the criteria because they will turn you away. And not to show up without an appointment either.

<http://health.co.lake.ca.us/Coronavirus/Vaccines.htm> or call 707-993-4644. You can also ask any vaccine questions by calling 211 or texting "covid19" to 211-211. Or visit <http://health.co.lake.ca.us/Coronavirus/Vaccines.htm>

A family who's neighbor had some concerns about them keeping a couple of goats on their property in Ukiah wins. The Daily Journal reports a hearing officer, William Finnegan, hired to hear administrative appeals by the city said Ruth Van Antwerp had no standing and the family could keep their pet goats. She filed an appeal with the city about her neighbor's pets, wanting them out of her and her pets view, and to make sure they were kept warm, dry and safe, which she says were not on the permit. The city council had approved of a new permitting process last year for people to keep livestock on their properties. Angel Schramer applied for a permit for her goats, which was approved. The appeals officer said he didn't find the animals were a nuisance and that Antwerp's other requests were not in the intended jurisdiction of the permitting process.

Lake County is forming a new ethics committee to decide who gets the COVID19 vaccinations first. They're work with the Public Health Officer, Dr. Gary Pace in an advisory role. Pace has the final say on the tiers who get vaccinated, but the county administrative officer says it'll be based on what other counties do too. Dr. Pace says the demand is outpacing the supply so he's prioritizing the most vulnerable people and school staff, so schools can reopen sooner. The ethics committee will include those from Latino and Native American communities, a hospital, a primary care clinic, the agricultural industry, and the business community, and one member of the public at large.

The Blue Ribbon Committee in Lakeport that works to keep Clear Lake clean has sent a letter to the state so it can use grant money it received to get to work. The committee presented to the city council this week on the projects they intend to get done this year after requests last year. The committee asking the Governor for \$6.5 million to help with the projects that'll help monitor the lake. The city council also discussed applying for a COVID- 19 Community Development Block Grant to get a new heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) system for the Silveira Community Center and for economic development activities in the city. The request after a survey of residents agreed to use the money on the Community Center.

79 local businesses in Lake County are getting a piece of the state's \$1 billion Small Business COVID-19 Relief Grant Program. The money comes by way of the Lake County CARES Small Business Assistance Grant Program. Some of the businesses who got the grant money will use it on bare necessities, like paying their rent. Others for outdoor dining needs, like heaters or seating. The grants went to lodging, restaurants, retailers, salons, the auto/boat industries, wineries, agriculture, construction, gym, technology, brewery/bar, childcare and healthcare. The businesses in the towns of Lakeport, Clearlake, Kelseyville, Middletown, Upper Lake, Cobb, Clearlake Oaks and Hidden Valley Lake.

Public Health Officials trying to stay ahead of the rocky rollout of the COVID19 vaccine. The Sonoma County Public Health Officer asking local healthcare providers to help the county run things smoother. The Press Democrat reports the county's director of health services has asked administrators at Kaiser Permanente, Providence St. Joseph Health and Sutter Health to work with the county on vaccinations and let officials know what their daily vaccination data is as it happens. They're also asking healthcare providers to give the vaccine to others not in their network and follow the priority tiers. That means healthcare workers, then local residents 75 years of age and older. The Governor said 65 and older, but the county says they don't have enough shots yet for that. About 32,000 residents have received their first shots.

A CVS Pharmacy in Sonoma has begun to offer the vaccine. One of the chains locations in nearly a dozen states starts in one week from today. The supply comes directly from the federal government, not the state. It's through a pharmacy partnership program providing about 250,000 total doses. Calif. is getting nearly 82,000 doses. You've got to be in the right tier though to get the shot at CVS and register in advance right on the CVS website. There are also other Bay Area locations administering doses in San Francisco and Sunnyvale and the city of Eureka will also get some doses.

The Governor says he thinks schools can reopen before every teacher gets a vaccine if the right safety protocols are in place. But teachers' unions, say, not so fast. United Teachers Los Angeles for example says vaccines should be a prerequisite before in person learning starts again. The Governor had a press conference on the pandemic yesterday saying there's low transmission in schools. He says he would love everyone in the state to get inoculated, who wants to, echoing what the CDC head is saying. That schools can safely reopen even if all teachers are not vaccinated and that a vaccine is not a prerequisite for safely reopening schools. But the CDC says other measures need to be in place to slow community transmission, including limiting certain activities like indoor sports.

A check in on a woman convicted of animal cruelty has her owning some chickens. The District Attorney in Mendocino County reports police went to the Caspar home of probationer Katie Rhiannon Smith and found her with six chickens which is against the law for someone with a history of animal cruelty. You may recall Smith was involved in a case of a dog shot in a botched euthanasia attempt, then abandoning the dog in the woods. The case of Thunder the Wonder Dog. The DA says for someone convicted in an animal cruelty case as a misdemeanor they cannot have any animal for five years and it's punishable with a fine of up to \$1,000. The chickens have been placed in protective custody of Mendocino County Animal Control and Smith faces more charges that could include revoking her probation.

02/05/21

The Mendocino Public Health Office is asking anyone who many have frequented several Fort Bragg places of business to go get a COVID19 test. Nothing said about an outbreak per se, just that there's a free testing site set up for the weekend and that anyone who went to Denny's, Mayan Fusion, Laurel Deli & Desserts, Silver's At The Wharf, Angelina's Bar & Grill, David's Deli & Restaurant or Noyo Harbor Inn & Restaurant anytime in the last two weeks, they should get tested. The free testing site is Sunday at 205 South Street, from 9AM – Noon – First come, first serve and it's a drive thru test. At the same time the public health office announced another 26 cases of the virus.

A young woman in Lake County taking her first off road excursion has died.

The CHP in Clear Lake reports 19-year-old Athena Karan of Santa Rosa died after the ride at the Indian Valley Reservoir last month. She was a passenger in a Honda Talon, an ATV. It was driven by Juan Carlos Torres, who's been arrested for two felonies: gross vehicular manslaughter and causing injury while driving under the influence of alcohol. Karan's mom says the driver was a new friend to Karan, someone she didn't know well and she was not with her regular group of friends. The CHP reports there was a "a large dip in the roadway" where the driver lost control and rolled the ATV. Karan was on the lap of someone else and was thrown off the vehicle.

The largest penalty so far for COVID19 work violations went to San Quentin State Prison. Cal/OSHA slapped the prison with a nearly \$422,000 fine after an inspection by the agency in June. Another prison was fined almost \$42,000 as well, Avenal State Prison. The two citations were announced yesterday after a damaging report by the state Office of the Inspector General which called out the state Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and California Correctional Health Care Services after inmates and prison staff got infected. The prison staff were accused in the report of rushing to transfer dozens of medically vulnerable inmates to two facilities, one of them was San Quentin. Prisoners were not isolated from others, causing a massive outbreak.

The former sheriff in Mendocino County Tom Allman announced he's had a massive heart attack. He posted on social media that while he was reporting to a fatal traffic accident in Humboldt County, where he works as a deputy now, a medic suggested he be evaluated in an ambulance on the scene. He says the paramedic saved his life because while inside the ambulance, the "big one" happened and the medic was completely prepared to use her skills, but also adds he wasn't exactly nice to her and wants to apologize. Allman says he was not a good patient, mostly because he was in extreme pain and hopes to see the paramedic again to say he was sorry and says, he's very appreciative and learned a life lesson. He's now back at work after surgery and recuperation.

A new lease agreement has been approved by the Clearlake City Council so that Cal Fire can help with cleanup around the city's main shopping center. The area's become a homeless camp where fires have broken out and trash has been left behind. The council voted unanimously for the lease agreement. It's about 31 acres at \$1 a year for two years. The property near Walmart, Tractor Supply and Big 5. The city was going to use the land as a second phase for the development of the Walmart but the local economy quashed the plans. The city manager says the land has been kind of ignored as of late and there's been attempts over the years to rectify the situation. There have been some title issues and other problems with the property. The city getting more actively involved now with Cal Fire to clean the land as part of a public ownership. Lake Co News reports the city manager said he wasn't sure when the work would start, but probably sometime in the spring.

The surge of the virus in the state came with winter, death and infection rates skyrocketed after Halloween, Thanksgiving, Xmas and New Years. A new report shows from last March to November, the 25 least populated counties in Calif had a total of 235 COVID-related deaths, about 60% lower than elsewhere in the state, per-capita. Then from Dec. 1st until Jan. 29th, the same rural counties had almost twice as many deaths, 427. There are about 1.2 million in the counties which include small towns and agricultural outposts which were barely hit in the early days of the pandemic. But they reported a 141% increase in late fall and early winter. The report says it's been most challenging for the smaller public health agencies across the state who have tight budgets, with minimal staffing and people who flouted public health measures like wearing masks and physical distancing.

Willits is hiring a search firm so it can find a new police chief. The city council voted unanimously to use a company they'd used in the past to help get some applications rolling in. The firm the city is using is a woman-and minority-owned business and says it's committed to "attracting and placing diverse candidates." Apparently the budget doesn't have an allowance for the expenditure which could be as much as \$24,000, but the city's finance department they can probably make up for it with the revised Police and Finance Budgets.

Adventist health announced a vaccination clinic and as fast as the hottest concert ticket used to sell out, the vaccination slots were gone. The mass COVID-19 vaccination event announced at Willits High School tomorrow for anyone 65 years of age and older. They were offering appointment signups online yesterday and by mid-morning the slots were taken. There are limited supplies of the vaccine, as you've probably noticed. And public health officials have been saying the demand far outpaces the supply. The hospital asks those who've made an appointment that if they cannot make it to let them know so they can schedule someone else. They also say to come alone and bring identification.

A panel put together in Calif. to decide the tier groups moving forward for vaccines is following the governor's guidance. They announced yesterday they were, for now, following Gov. Newsom's decision so that age is the main metric for who gets the vaccine first. The panel made the announcement yesterday and some advocates were speaking out for those with chronic health conditions or are disabled, saying they should move up the line with people over age 65. The panel of experts apparently looked at research that showed older people had a far greater chance of being hospitalized or dying from the virus over those with significant disabilities or medical conditions.

The County of Mendocino has won \$2.2 million from the Cannabis Equity Grants Program for Local Jurisdictions. The money comes by way of the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz). Plus the Board of Supervisor's has another \$100,000 matching grant money for the local Cannabis Equity Program. They say they are aiming to give money and services to those who've been hardest hit by the War on Drugs by lowering barriers to cannabis permitting and licensing. Applications open today, those applying need to meet certain requirements and will get a Mendocino County Local Equity Entrepreneur Program designation and Equity Applicant identification number so they can apply for the grant money.

**For more information:** <https://www.mendocinocounty.org/government/pl>

The Community Foundation of Mendocino County has announced \$100,000 is available from the Community Resiliency and Disaster Preparedness grant program. The money goes to support effective, realistic, and coordinated planning, reduce duplication and increase overall effectiveness of disaster preparedness. The goal to minimize the impact disasters have on the community and to save more lives and protect livelihoods. So nonprofits in Mendocino County are invited to submit proposals by February 26th.. In 2019 the fund awarded \$50,000 in grants to nine organizations and last year the money went to 19 organizations. The grants this year will range from \$1,000 – \$10,000.

Sheriff Matt Kendall and the FBI held a public briefing on the disappearance of a young woman from Covelo who's been missing for 3 years. Khadijah Britton was last seen, her family says, being forced into a car with her former boyfriend Negie Fallis. Sheriff Kendall didn't have any new light to shed on the cold case, but said there's someone out there who knows something...

The event was on Facebook Live, it was very hard to understand as the sheriff's microphone was not near his face. An FBI agent there said anyone with information on the case could call their office in San Francisco. Any leads could be anonymous. The Sheriff said as a community, it's our duty to help the family find out what happened to Khadijah.

The Mendocino County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services Department is taking over the Measure B program administration. In an announcement last Friday, Dr. Jenine Miller, Director Of Mendocino County's Behavioral Health and Recovery Services said they'll take on all of the responsibilities for the Measure B Commission which will eliminate the need for a program manager. She says they made the decision to save money and hope it will result in more efficiencies for program management and most importantly, more demonstrable results for the community. Some of their tasks are preparing for all meetings, putting out the meeting minutes, monitoring fiscal activities for any Measure B projects and programs and to continue developing the Crisis Residential Treatment Facility and the

The Mendocino County Public Health Officer has put out new guidance regarding vaccinations. Following what the state Department of Public Health is saying on how much vaccine, its storage and administration, and how the county will report vaccines. Local clinics, medical providers and the City of Ukiah are authorized to distribute the COVID-19 vaccines and follow all guidelines set out by the state. And the vaccine partners will continue to keep up with what the state is directing as far as tiers who can get the vaccine, reporting any issues with the vaccine after it's administered within 24 hours and keep records for at least 3 years after or longer, if required by law. And will follow CDC requirements for vaccine management and the storage and distribution as well. The County Health Officer also asks partners to immediately notify of any temperature fluctuation in storage and not to bypass any distribution tiers.

The Gov. had to revise guidelines for church services and other places of indoor worship after the Supreme Court ruled it was illegal to not allow people inside, pandemic, or not. The Governor's office revised guidelines this weekend after the ban on indoor worship was lifted. But the court did keep restrictions in place for singing and chanting. The rulings came out Friday after a couple of lawsuits argued the restrictions were a violation of religious liberty. The justices ruled California could not continue the ban on indoor services but could limit attendance to 25% of a building's capacity and keep the ban in place for singing and chanting in doors. So the new guidance does just that, limits indoor activities at 25% for places where the virus is widespread or has substantial spread at 25%; and places where the spread is considered moderate to minimum is limited to 50% capacity.

A donation of land to Lake County will be considered by the Board of Supervisors this week. The land would be for a new park. The board is also taking time to discuss whether they should limit in person services to the public amidst the continuing pandemic. The board will meet virtually tomorrow on Zoom. The new Northshore Park being proposed would be in the name of John T. Klaus too. Last month the board considered a temporary resolution to reduce in person services because of the pandemic and to keep board chambers closed for in person meetings. As with every other meeting the Public Health Officer will also speak.

The Governor has hosted a virtual meeting with some small business owners. With Gov. Newsom, Isabel Guzman, the Director of California's Office of the Small Business Advocate (CalOSBA), Dee Dee Myers, Director of the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GOBiz) and legislative leaders, along with state entrepreneurs who have received money from the state's first round of Small Business COVID-19 Relief Grants. The state reports awarding \$237.5 million in that first round and look to distribute the same amount again in the second round which opened for applications today. So far over 21,000 small businesses got a grant. The Governor's 2021-22 State Budget proposal has more money set aside, \$1.1 billion in immediate relief for small businesses.



Several Fort Bragg businesses have reportedly had positive COVID19 tests so surveillance testing has been conducted. Mendocino County Health officials reported seven restaurants were impacted and more than a dozen employees were infected. The county's Dept. Operation Center reported not all of the businesses had 3 cases, which would be an official outbreak, but all seven restaurants are apparently part of the spread. They're identified as Angelina's Bar and Grill, David's Deli and Restaurant, Denny's, Mayan Fusion, Laurel's Deli and Dessert, Noyo Harbor Inn and Restaurant and Silvers at the Wharf. The county reported there were 15 employees from one or more of the establishments where someone tested positive. The Public Health Officer Dr. Andy Coren says there was not evidence anyone in the community had gotten it from employees, they were passing it among themselves.

The Fort Bragg mayor has put out a statement about the Mendocino Coast Hospitality Center and the Winter Shelter. Mayor Bernie Norvell says the Hospitality Center had contacted the city about using the "Old Recreation Center" for the Coast Winter Shelter because they couldn't find another place for the shelter due to several reasons, including the pandemic and many facilities having to stay closed. A proposal was submitted the mayor says to start the shelter in December, but they had issues finding enough people to staff it. An ad hoc committee told the City Council they should raise the hourly rate so the shelter eventually opened a month late at Trinity Lutheran, but it can't go through all of March so another venue needed to be found. The mayor says he spoke to facilities and organizations. He says he reached out to the Caspar Shul and they approved the last 2 weeks of March. But the mayor says he's having issues with the hospitality center working with the Shul now and in his public statement wondering why, including retaliation against the city, dislike of the mayor or revenge on local businesses.

Police in Fort Bragg warning about a possible text messaging scam. Police say they've had multiple complaints from citizens of attempted fraud by text message, asking if they would be interested in advertising for "Bang" energy drinks, by placing a "wrap" style decal on their vehicle. The potential victims who do respond with a mailing address lets the scammer know where they live. They've been asking for checks for \$1,950.50 to deposit in your own bank account thru an ATM or Mobile Deposit machine with detailed instructions. Police say the texts have mis-spelled words and grammar problems which are common indicators of fraudulent activity. Police say to call if this happens to you and not to respond if you get a similar text message.

The Mendocino County Public Health Office says yes to the COVID Safety Plan sent to them by Ukiah Schools. The county is awaiting the state's response to the same, then once it's fully approved, and case numbers are at 25 or less positive cases per 100,000 people, the phased in reopening of schools can commence February 16th. The following week will be even more classrooms and more after the county hits the Red tier. Right now, we're still in Purple. It's also all contingent on what the state says.

The Calif Public Health Office is out with new facial covering guidance. As a reminder wearing a mask prevents you from getting and spreading the virus. Wearing is required across the state if you're outside your home, with limited exceptions. As we have come to find out this past year, coronavirus spreads when an infected person coughs, sneezes, sings, talks, or breathes within 6 feet of others, so covering your mouth and nose will slow the spread. Make sure it covers your nose and mouth and is secure under your chin, that it fits snugly against the sides of your face, that you can breathe easily and if there's a constant need to adjust your mask, it doesn't fit.

The largest utility companies in the state are putting out their guidance for how they intend to use billions they've promised to spend to reduce the risk of wildfires. It comes after last summer's record breaking fires, the worst in modern history and because a series of fires have been blamed on their equipment. The companies, Pacific Gas & Electric, Southern California Edison, San Diego Gas & Electric and other smaller utilities have filed paperwork with the state for yearly plans on how they'll mitigate the risk. The documents have been sent to the California's Public Utilities Commission for approval. PG&E's plan is for this and next year and outlines the areas most prone for fires and where they'll focus their mitigation efforts.

A man in Ukiah's been arrested after calls from the Motel 6 on S. State St. where a man was disturbing customers and wouldn't leave. Police reported to the motel and found the man using a broom with a broken handle to sweep dirt away. They identified him as Artemio Ortega-Reyes and say he seemed high on drugs, was uncooperative, argumentative and wouldn't let go of the broom. They got it away from him and say he took a fighting stance and resisted them. The one officer called for backup and when they all tried subduing the guy, the 1st officer broke his hand and another officer was also injured. They came to find he was probably on meth, as they found some in his pocket along with a pipe. He was finally arrested after being treated himself for minor injuries. He's charged with resisting or obstructing officers, possession of drugs and possessing drug paraphernalia.

02/09/21 [The 35th annual Mendocino County Science and Engineering Fair is happeni](#)

[Or for more information, visit \[www.mcoe.us/student-programs-services/studei\]\(http://www.mcoe.us/student-programs-services/studei\)](#)

Educators and school staff are in line to get the vaccination in Sonoma County finally. About 100 people got their first shots yesterday. It was the Moderna coronavirus vaccine. The Press Democrat reports at the same time the vaccinations began, the county's adjusted 7 day case rate was under 25 per 100,000 people, a dramatic decline in infections. So by state standards, in person learning for prekindergarten to sixth graders could start, in a modified fashion. But schools and their districts have to get their COVID Safety Plans approved by the county and the state. The paper reports there are about 15 currently being reviewed by the county.

Pacific Gas & Electric Co. has put out more detailed plans about next steps to prevent wildfires. As we reported yesterday utility companies across the state have sent their plans in to regulators for wildfire mitigation after their equipment was responsible for massive fires across the state. PG&E has promised to spend as much as \$6 billion by the end of next year on new technology and work on their power grid in both Northern and Central California, where their equipment was linked to several deadly and destructive wildfires. The new technology would show where areas are prone to catastrophic fires, where the utility will replace old power equipment, trim trees and do other work. It's all in a more than 1,000 page plan sent to utility regulators Friday.

The state Insurance Commissioner has a way homeowner's insurance policies are not canceled by hardening their homes against wildfires. Commissioner Ricardo Lara announced yesterday ways homeowners can protect themselves from higher rates too, encouraging home fire-safe retrofits he says can also save lives and property. Starting this month he says he'll meet with insurance companies, utilities, emergency and forestry leaders. His deputy says he wants new standards in place so insurance companies can provide incentives that will help guide local governments in planning efforts and investments. They're still fleshing the deals out but could include state money to help.

One of the mutant strains of coronavirus has been detected in Yolo County. We reported the same was found in Lake County within the last couple of weeks, now the city of Davis, UC Davis, and Yolo County have jointly announced the variant known as B.1.1.7, which first surfaced in the United Kingdom is now in that county. It was detected after scientists at the Genome Center started genotyping positive samples of the virus last month to specifically monitor for various strains. As we've heard the various strains could overtake the original one and become more dominant. This particular strain spreads faster and is more contagious. The county's public health officer says the person who had it was notified and is in isolation with contact tracing efforts started immediately.

The state of Calif is reporting under 10,000 new COVID19 cases/day. The case numbers on the decline after a couple of months of surging cases after about Thanksgiving. The amount of deaths is still high, which is the case, increases in deaths following weeks behind surges in cases. But still there are about 20% less deaths/day, but one report says February may still be the second most deaths in the state since the pandemic first came about. Hospitalizations were down by almost 50%, but the state is still, unfortunately, number one in hospitalizations, but Arizona, New York, Georgia, Texas, Nevada and New Jersey have more hospitalizations per capita.

A marijuana company in Potter Valley, Skunkworx raided by Sheriff's Deputies 2 years ago has filed suit and lost twice in state court. The Mendocino Voice reports cannabis grower Andres Rondon filed a lawsuit in 2019 saying he was a legal grower, and as such, his product was taken improperly, then destroyed. But he lost so he's appealing in federal court now, seeking damages of \$800,000. The county's lawyers are trying to get the case tossed saying even though recreational weed is legal locally, it's still illegal federally. A call about intruders on the property, the owner says, turned into destruction. Deputies for their part said they couldn't find a permit for legal weed, so they destroyed it. The Voice also reported Rondon filed for a cannabis growing permit in July 2017, but withdrew the application in December 2019. The judge in the federal case canceled the hearing and is deciding the case based on court documents.

A call into the sheriff's office about a possible crime scene, was not that. A shallow grave turned out to be someone's family pet was buried there. A road worker in the area of Talmage Road and Babcock Lane reportedly called in what looked to be a fresh grave near a vineyard, so they called the Sheriff's office. Detectives reported to the area and a crime scene was cordoned off with law enforcement reporting. Then they apparently started excavating, but it was not a human body, but instead a dog. The Mendocino Voice says one of their readers sent them the tip and the Sheriff confirmed the incident.

Vaccinations have been lopsided in the state, but the governor says that's going to change. Newsom announced last week working to get folks vaccinated who live in communities, "often left behind." He was in San Diego yesterday saying they want an "equitable distribution of the vaccine" and intimated there may soon be a mass vaccination site announced for farm and food workers in central California. It comes after Dodger Stadium, in East Los Angeles and the Oakland Coliseum. The state is also going to start paying providers who offer vaccinations in vulnerable neighborhoods and communities of color. But some counties have started all of this without the state. And Santa Clara County called on the governor to prioritize doses for ZIP codes with the highest COVID-19 rates.

More info on the lawsuit filed by the former police chief for Willits. Alexis Blaylock was only chief about five weeks. She was sworn-in August 26th of 2020 and resigned October 8th. She has claimed a hostile work environment, harassment, sexism, and racism. Her lawyers say she'll drop the whole thing if the city pays her \$500,000 and commit to start doing workplace discrimination and retaliation training so the city and police department are "more tolerant, effective, and honest." Her lawyers contend Blaylock was "met with immediate hostility from subordinates openly resistant to a Black, female Chief and opposed to accountability." It names names of those who were opposed to her position and who complained about her when she tried to "implement basic, but essential procedures".

Anyone in Mendocino County who has received their first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine at the Redwood Empire Fairgrounds in Ukiah on or before Jan. 15th can sign up now to reserve a spot to get their second dose this week. The county's giving the second doses of the Pfizer vaccine tomorrow and second doses of the Moderna vaccine tomorrow through Friday. Those who get an appointment need to bring an ID and vaccination card. The second doses started January 21st for those who got inoculated in December.

An heiress from San Francisco has agreed to protect almost 15,000 acres of old growth redwoods in southern Mendocino County. The Press Democrat reports the Mailliard Ranch has the biggest redwood forest that a private family owns and is in the Anderson Valley between Yorkville and Boonville. The paper reports socialite Charlotte Mailliard Shultz and her family agreed to the \$24.7 million deal with the Save the Redwoods League. The League president says protecting the ranch has been a priority of theirs for decades. The family still owns the land but it will be protected from development. Mailliard Shultz's husband, was the former secretary of state George Shultz who just died Saturday at the age of 100.

An inmate at the Lake County Jail had to be given NARCAN after an apparent overdose. Jail staff reported an inmate appeared to be overdosing in a female dorm. Deputies found the woman on her side, appearing blue in her face and not breathing. They rushed a dose of NARCAN to her and called paramedics. The sheriff's office reports nurses arrived to help and the NARCAN began taking effect within ten minutes. Paramedics took her to Sutter Lakeside where she was treated, then taken back to jail. Upon further investigation, they didn't find any drugs. So they're unsure how they got there. The Sheriff's Office reminds medication/pills not prescribed by a physician or provided by a pharmacist are dangerous and that opiates like Fentanyl can be fatal with only a small amount.

02/10/21

Several COVID19 outbreaks are being monitored in Mendocino County. The Public Health Office updating the Board of Supervisors on one outbreak at Mountain View Assistant Care in Ukiah and another outbreak connected to seven separate restaurants in Fort Bragg, and a third in Round Valley. There's a fourth too, still ongoing at the Mendocino County jail. The assisted living facility involved 18 people, 12 patients and 6 staff members who tested positive for the virus. The Fort Bragg restaurant outbreak resulted in 15 positive tests. The establishments are were cleaned and are all said to be being responsive to public health protocols. 200 residents in Fort Bragg were also tested Sunday. The Round Valley outbreak was from a memorial service and a congregate group of living individuals with another 15 positive cases there. Testing was conducted in the region and all tests from Round Valley and Fort Bragg should come back by tomorrow. The jail outbreak has 2 positive inmates after a total 145 positives, 128 inmates, and 17 employees. They're currently running tests twice weekly at the jail to slow the spread.

The California Public Utilities Commission is meeting for a vote on contracts for more power generation, so we don't see more of last summer's blackouts. Clean-energy groups say it's unclear how much energy we need – because the state's explanations for the outages were insufficient. The California Independent System Operator, known as CAISO, blamed the blackouts primarily on excessive heat, breakdowns at power plants and software issues. But Loretta Lynch, former head of the California Public Utilities Commission, says there's more to the story.

:16 “It may well be that defects in California’s electricity market design and in its operations have allowed for trading strategies that created artificial supply shortages and that those caused last summer’s blackouts.”

**Tag: Some say they're worried there will be a repeat of the energy crisis of 2000, when oil companies manipulated the state's electricity market, costing billions to the state. Data shows last August, huge price spikes rocked the California energy market – sending it shooting up from 40 dollars to one thousand dollars per megawatt hour. Second Cut: Rick Humphreys is a retired engineer and an expert in root cause analysis. He says consumers are stuck with the bill.**

:07 “It’s well over \$1 billion of costs that’s going to get passed on to ratepayers in CAISO. And that’s a wholesale.”

**Third Cut: The agency admits that a software glitch allowed energy to be exported to other states during California’s greatest hour of need. Humphreys says that’s what put California over the edge.**

(video) “There’s lots of excess capacity in the state of California. If it hadn’t been for the exports, there would have been no blackouts.”

**Fourth Cut: CAISO’s policy is to hold back reserve power in case a nuclear plant goes down, and this was not changed even during the blackouts, when three natural gas-powered plants went offline. Retired public interest lawyer Bill Julian wants lawmakers to force CAISO and the Public Utilities Commission to dig deeper.**

(video) “We have a troubling pattern of forced outages and power-plant unavailability that strained supplies and requires investigation.”

**Tag: Advocates also want the P-U-C to require So Cal Edison, Pacific Gas and Electric, and San Diego Gas and Electric to share data from smart meters with local governments that have Community Choice Energy Programs. The idea is that with better information on usage, CAISO might be able to avoid unnecessary blackouts.**

School is restarting in Ukiah, in person, anyway. The metrics were approved by public health. They include no food allowed in classes, mask wearing by students, four to six feet of social distance at all times and targeted vaccinations for school staff. The Press Democrat reports the vaccination part got teachers to agree to come back. Something being seen across the nation. In Chicago teachers just agreed to come back, but vaccinations were not in their agreement even though the union wanted it. Here in Mendocino County, the teachers union president says it may have been the number one priority. So schools will be able to reopen next week. In Sonoma County, there’s no targeted date yet for a return to in person learning. So tens of thousands of students continue at home, online school for now. Napa, Marin, Lake and now Mendocino are allowed to return to in-person learning.

Some more vaccination appointments are opening up in Lake County. The Public Health Office says there are a limited number of doses, and they're first doses for those 65 and older. The office says the amount of new cases are declining, but only about 10 percent of the county's 64,000 residents have gotten their first dose and only about 1,000 have received both doses. Same story across the board, demand outpaces supply. In Lake County, the public health office says they're scheduling appointments one week at a time. Right now they're expecting another 1,000 doses to arrive this week. Sutter Lakeside and Adventist Health Clear Lake are getting supplies direct and are also reportedly slowing down their pace because of supply issues.

In these trying times, a bright spot, a new drive thru bakery and coffee shop has been approved by the Clearlake Planning Commission. It was a unanimous vote for the owner of a drive-thru Bakery in Clearlake Oaks, and coffee shop in downtown Lakeport to combine the ideas and locate them together in Clearlake. Since it's drive thru it requires a special permit and special regulation review due to traffic, aesthetics and other special uses. There will be a small building, which was a house that was already remodeled in 2017 for a bakery, Classy Cakes, which closed down. So there will be minor renovations and a drive thru window installed, along with other improvements.

Ukiah Unified Schools announces some good news, a reopening for in person learning Tuesday. A day after the President's Day holiday the school District will reopen class for students in mixed grades, through sixth grade. This past Monday, the Fort Bragg Unified School District, also approved reopening. They'll go with the following week, Feb. 22nd and are also starting with mixed grades through 6th grade. In Willits, they're reportedly going for lower grades next month. The Mendocino Voice reports the Ukiah Teachers Association said the rollout of the vaccines have made it feel safer and those who wanted to get vaccinated were able to. There are some lined up for their second dose tomorrow. Higher grades will have to wait until Mendocino County is in the Red Tier, right now it's still Purple here.

An apartment complex in Lakeport that burned a couple of years ago, has reopened for tenants. The Bel Aire Apartments burned in November of 2018. They go all the way back to 1927. After the fire already damaged the building, there was water damage leaving the building in disrepair. The Record Bee reports the exterior of the building was left standing but inside was another story. It needed a lot of retrofits and upgrades. The building was purchased by a local family who brought the building back from ashes. Some of the 14 units are ready to rent. They are one and two bedrooms with a bathroom, modern kitchen and lake views. They also have parking, onsite laundry, high speed internet, and all new flooring, and appliances.

A school in Kelseyville is opening for kindergarten through third grade. The new school won't open until the fall of 2022 and that depends on enrollment. The board of Shade Canyon School has approved of an expansion to include transitional kindergarten through third grade. It comes after a Community Interest Survey. They'll add a grade each year until they get to a full TK-8th grade model and add Waldorf style second and third grade. They're turning in a petition this spring to the School District (KVUSD) Board to get an authorization as a charter school which could mean they can tap into more funds from the state and offer a tuition- free, public Waldorf style education option.

CalFresh in Lower Lake is offering a 15% bump in what families are getting through June. The temporary increase comes automatically, so families don't have to do anything to get it. And they report most of the families already receiving CalFresh have been notified or will be. It will appear on their EBT (Electronic Benefit Transfer) card. Any student who is in state or federal work study may also be eligible for CalFresh food benefits.

The state Department of Public Health looking into reports from a whistleblower there was mismanagement and incompetence at the state's new billion-dollar COVID-19 testing laboratory. The Press Democrat reports the PerkinElmer-run lab which is located outside Los Angeles is accused of employing people sleeping on the job, had contamination inside that caused inconclusive tests, swapped samples and the wrong results sent to patients. CBS in Sacramento reports some of the employees were accused of handling patient specimens without the proper credentials or training. Current and former employees tell the news station they found COVID-19 test swabs in restrooms and personally witnessed technicians nodding off as they processed samples for testing. A Republican state Senator has called for an investigation saying if true this sort of behavior jeopardizes the health and safety of over 40 million Californians.

The Mendocino County Sheriff's Office reports deputies are working with colleagues in the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office on a murder investigation. An 85 year old rancher was murdered the end of last month. The Mendocino County Sheriff's Detectives are reported canvassing the area to see if anyone may know what happened January 26th to local rancher Richard Grayson Drewery. Humboldt deputies are leading the investigation. Drewery lived close to the Mendocino County line. There was a police dog on the scene as detectives continued to comb the area where Drewery was reportedly shot to death. There is so far no suspect in the case and the local sheriff's dept. is asking anyone who may know something to call.

The state will soon offer the COVID-19 vaccine at participating CVS pharmacies. The scheduling system is opening in counties with CVS locations who are part of the partnership with the federal government. The first allotment for the drug store giant is 250,000 doses. But only about 82,000 doses are coming to 100 California CVS pharmacies. Some of those could be located inside Target stores. They're scheduling your first and second dose at the same time and give you a vaccination card to bring for the second dose. CVS reports appointments will be weekly and fill up quickly. They're getting what's available of both the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines. Once they get more doses, patients will be able to see which vaccine it is that they have. CVS says they hope to eventually get vaccine doses at almost all of their nearly 10,000 pharmacies.

02/11/21

The first 2 cases of the strong mutant variant of COVID19 from South Africa have emerged in Calif. The Governor announced yesterday the state is doing much better as a whole, but the two cases surfaced in Alameda and Santa Clara counties, both in the San Francisco Bay Area. The word is the mutant strains are more contagious and may be less responsive to treatments and vaccines. The one from South Africa apparently doesn't respond to at least one vaccine. Gov. Newsom says the mutations are top of mind. He's been traveling the state as of late to talk about vaccines. He says infection rates, hospitalizations and cases are all on the decline. But the state has passed New York, hit hard early in the pandemic, for the number of deaths.

A man from Ukiah has been arrested after a report of a sexual assault on a passed out female victim. The Sheriff's Office reports it happened in Willits Tuesday. And that they arrested 27 year old Cody Martin for assaulting a 28 year old woman with a foreign object after the two drank a bunch of booze the night before. Deputies report the woman went into a bedroom and closed the door and fell asleep. But says she was awakened by someone touching her and says it was Cody Martin, an ex-boyfriend. Deputies say he took his clothes off then got in bed with the woman and took her clothes off and assaulted her with an unknown object or body part without consent. He's arrested and held on \$50,000.00 bail.



The Lake County Small Business COVID19 Recovery Team continues helping local companies since the pandemic started. The team was put together last year to help businesses get access to relief funding programs, including the State's California Relief Grants and the Federal Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). The County of Lake, Cities of Clearlake and Lakeport, Lake County Chamber of Commerce, Lake County Economic Development Corporation and Middletown Area Merchants Association are part of the Recovery Team. They sent a letter to the state to urge equitable shares of grant money for Lake County businesses, an equitable share of grant funding for California's Rural Counties and for the state to consider the "economic weight" a business carries as they prioritize the distribution of funds.

A string of burglaries and vandalism is being investigated in Mendocino County. The Sheriff's Office reports looking into incidents in remote areas of Pine Ridge Road and Low Gap Road the last several weeks. They're asking anyone who knows anything to give them a call, a picture of a possible suspect has been posted at Mendofever.com. You can then call the Sheriff's Office Dispatch Center if you know who it is.

The largest utility in the state plans a town hall for residents in Lake and Napa counties to help mitigate fire risk. Pacific Gas and Electric Co. is gathering input from the public and will share their work in hard hit areas next week. The meeting online next Wednesday at noon. Representatives will cover PG&E's wildfire prevention activities, 2020 Public Safety Power Shutoff events and local vegetation management efforts.

The meeting is at noon Feb. 17th. Click to join: [bit.ly/3qHRZQY](https://bit.ly/3qHRZQY). Or dial-in: 86

[To access the virtual safety town hall or view recordings of past wildfire safety](#)

California has surpassed New York for the number of deaths related to coronavirus. There have been 44,995 deaths in the state. Another 518 yesterday alone. New York was hit hard in the beginning of the pandemic, and again over the holidays. California was likewise hit hard over the holidays and had a surge over the summer too. New York has had 44,851 deaths. And Texas is gaining on the two states with nearly 40,300. But the deaths are starting to decline and cases are leveling off across the country. Most of the deaths in Calif. have been in counties of Southern California, accounting for 70% of the statewide total, led by Los Angeles County, then Riverside County, Orange County and finally, San Diego County.

The Governor and the legislature have a plan for elementary school reopening protocols. But it's still up to local jurisdictions as to what they do. The Governor said this week the youngest children can safely go to school in "small cohorts." But many teachers unions want their teachers to get vaccinated first, which has been a priority in ongoing negotiations for many districts. Some districts say all of the teachers who have wanted to take a vaccine have gotten it, others say some have received first doses and are waiting for second doses before reopening and still others like in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties say they're not sure when their teachers might get vaccinated. Each district has different vaccination policies it seems. In Mendocino County, Ukiah is opening Tuesday, Fort Bragg the next week and Willits in March.

Another death from coronavirus has been reported in Mendocino County. The Public Health Office announced another 28 cases of COVID-19 too. The 40th death was an elderly man in the South Coast region. A Public Health spokeswoman says it "marks a grim milestone for our community" the death of "an 81-year-old American Indian male" who died at a hospital.

The public health office defines the region as including the communities of Mendocino, Little River, Albion, Elk, Manchester, Point Arena, Anchor Bay, Gualala. They remind us to "continue to avoid gatherings, even if you have been vaccinated. One can still spread the virus even if they have been vaccinated, so social distancing is still key."

There's now a Calif. variant of coronavirus and it's in Lake and Marin counties. The Press Democrat reports the Sonoma County Public Health Office says the variant appears to be the globally dominant strain of coronavirus which first surfaced just over a year ago in Wuhan, China. There have been various strains now, one from the UK and another from South Africa which appears to be resistant to vaccines. The new Calif. variant is being called B1429 and is part of the "second wave" of the virus, which started after the holidays. The Lake County Public Health Officer Dr. Gary Pace says there were two other strains of concern, and this one is "of interest". It was first detected in Los Angeles last July and had a minimal amount of spread, but then in November, it took off, all the way out as far as New York City, South Carolina and Seattle.

A new rule says utility companies have to make sure all critical and vulnerable phone systems have 72 hrs of backup power. It comes after intentional power shutoffs by PG&E over a year ago. The state's utility regulator, the Public Utilities Commission, voted unanimously there has to be backup battery requirements within a year and a half for landlines and internet phones. AT&T and Comcast have previously said backup power regulations would be expensive and wouldn't necessarily work. The president of the commission said indeed it would be challenging but they're more concerned about public safety, especially in communities at risk of being cut off during emergencies.

02/12/21

A law that went into effect on New Years days says state regulated health plans need better mental health coverage. They also have to follow nationally recognized clinical standards to decide which mental health and addiction treatments they'll cover. So if someone needs rehab or mental health care of another sort they can decide how long and where a patient stays. The new regulations update an old statute in California. Previously there were only nine severe mental health illnesses and federal law has called for better coverage, but it's not been outlined in a detailed fashion. There are those against the new law, mostly insurers and the Chamber of Commerce who say it'll be too costly.

More unemployment claims are compiling in the state. Another 132,800 initial claims for unemployment were filed for the week ending Feb. 6th, nearly 24,000 more than a week before. But unemployment claims are down across the nation. The claims were off 19,000 from the previous week. The new data has California with 16% of all of the jobless claims filed across the country. For almost a year the state has had over 100,000 claims.

The Lake County Public Health office says it looks like cases of COVID-19 are coming down finally. Dr. Gary Pace says they've been seeing mostly positive trends in case rates and testing positivity, but the virus is still widespread. Pace reported as of yesterday, over 2,940 cases and 36 deaths. There are 5 people in the hospital. The variant in Calif. now the L452R was detected in the county. They're doing surveillance testing across the state to see where else it might be. Out of 40 samples, Dr. Pace says nine had the strain in Lake County. And Pace says there will be vaccination clinics coming next week. The drive thru sites will be in Lakeport on Mondays and Tuesdays, and in Clearlake on Thursdays and Fridays.

A new ad hoc committee has been put together in Lake County for vaccine equity. Dr. Gary Pace, the county's public health officer says the state's been providing guidance on what tiers should get inoculated first, which should be balanced he says, emphasizing those in "disproportionately impacted communities, settings and populations." Across the country, and in Lake County, Latino and Native American populations have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19. Dr. Pace says agricultural workers should also be a priority. The COVID-19 Ethics Ad Hoc Committee is made up of strong advocates from the Latino and Native American communities, business and agriculture, hospital and primary care medicine, and one "at-large" representative. They had their first meeting this week.

Congressman Mike Thompson is the Chair of the powerful House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Select Revenue Measures. He has voted to advance a new COVID19 rescue measure through the Ways and Means Committee which includes another round of direct payments to Americans. This one for \$1,400. Thompson says the pandemic continues to hurt working families and small businesses, so they have to do everything they can to help. Some of the other provisions include extending unemployment benefits, more tax credits, affordable and accessible health coverage, protecting residents of nursing homes and helping vulnerable children, workers and families continuing to struggle to make ends meet.

State Senator Mike McGuire will continue as the assistant majority leader for that legislative body. Senate President Toni Atkins nominated McGuire again. He's had the position for two years. He thanked President Atkins saying he's grateful to lead during one of the most difficult times in the state and country, due to the pandemic. He's also the chair of the Senate's Governance and Finance Committee and vice chair of the Democratic Caucus. He also serves on several committees in the Senate including Budget and Fiscal Review, Environmental Protection and Energy, a Special Committee on Pandemic Emergency Response, Education, plus he's also the Chair of the Joint Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture.

The Ukiah School's Superintendent has put out a letter to families saying how excited she is that in person learning will begin again. The Superintendent says the Ukiah Unified COVID Safety Plan was approved by both Mendocino County Public Health and California Safe Schools since the coronavirus case rate in the county is below 25 positive cases per 100,000 population. So school for TK – 2, and Special Day Classes, Grade 5 at Eagle Peak, and Grade 6 at Pomolita are opening Tuesday. She says school sites will be in touch with families with more details. The following week will be 3rd – 6th grade. But grades 7 – 12 have to wait until the county is in the Red Tier. Kids have to wear a mask, they will continue strict social distancing and hand hygiene and ask families to continue screening at home for any symptoms and stay home and get tested if you experience any.

A local restaurant in Ukiah is closed due to a family member of an employee testing positive for COVID19. The restaurant called, The Office, is closed until all staffers are tested, they say, to err on the side of caution. They will reopen after all tests are back and they do a fogging and deep cleaning of the restaurant. Their social media post also said they're do their best to call anyone who had Valentine's Day reservations.

A man accused in a triple homicide in Humboldt County has been arrested in Utah. The Sheriff's Office reports 18-year-old Mauricio Eduardo Johnson of Loleta was busted over state lines and will be held on no bail on homicide charges for the Bear River incident. The Sheriff's office reported two cars connected to Johnson were thought to be in the State of Utah so they called the Utah Highway Patrol and the Tooele (Too-ill-uh) County Sheriff's Office to try to capture Johnson, which they did. They found him with a woman too, there was a short chase. Johnson and Von Eric Keener were arrested, Johnson on murder and Keener on a parole violation. The woman was detained with possible charges coming.

[If you'd like to get the COVID19 vaccine and you're in an eligible tier, CVS is](#)

Schools in Lake County are starting to research the best date for reopening for in person learning. The Record Bee reports Middletown and Lakeport Schools discussed possible start dates last week, with Lakeport coming up with March 8th, in 3 weeks. In Middletown they've been preparing, buying masks, and other personal protective equipment, cleaning supplies and sanitizer, portable hand washing stations and air purifiers for every classroom. Lakeport is doing a lot of the same, following the last members of staff being vaccinated. The Middletown High School Principal said they should be reopening due to mental health and motivation, saying even a fraction of the interaction the students are having now is necessary. They're also planning to start sports.

02/15/21

Assemblymember Cecilia Aguiar-Curry has introduced legislation for the olive oil industry. Similar to wine and cannabis, Aguiar-Curry's bill establishes when the word "California" can be placed on product labels and marketing. The Assemblywoman says it will protect California olive growers and manufacturers. The bill was introduced last year, but due to the pandemic, many bills were tabled so they could work mainly on COVID-19 related emergency legislation. Calif. produces about 4% of the world's olive oil and apparently some of the products are from outside the state and have the word California on their labels with as little as 14% California olive oil in their blends.

After another marathon meeting of the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors, they hear from the public health officer and discuss forming committees. The board considering a new Public Safety Advisory Board but didn't consider a recent piece of legislation so the county could also form a sheriff oversight board, so they put the item aside for now. They discussed with the Public Health Officer, Dr. Andy Coren four outbreaks of COVID19. One is pretty serious at the Mountain View Assisted Living Facility in Ukiah where 140 individuals have been infected. There was also an outbreak in Fort Bragg associated with 7 restaurants. Dr. Coren says their contract tracers were not getting far. So far the county has administered more than 11,000 vaccine doses.

The parents of a 12 year old boy say he ran away. So the Lake County Sheriff's Office and Search and Rescue teams are looking for Austin Darnell near Hidden Valley Lake. His mom posted on Facebook yesterday the boy had not been seen since that afternoon northeast of Hidden Valley Lake. They called police after about 4 hours and over 20 people started searching for him in rough terrain. They will continue today in what's supposed to be a cold, rainy day.

A former planning commissioner from Lakeport is being honored by the City Council. The council is meeting tomorrow in closed session to discuss ongoing labor negotiations before presenting Ken Wicks, Jr. with a proclamation for years of service to the city. Lake Co News reports that includes almost ten years on the planning commission with his final term ending at the end of 2020. The city manager will also discuss working with a contractor to keep businesses in town and bring new ones in. The contract with the contractor was on hold due to the pandemic.

Sonoma County Supervisors are asking the Sheriff's Office why there have been no citations for public health violations since the summer. The Press Democrat reports the Sheriff has also not turned in any records to the county since summertime on any formal actions. The newspaper reports after getting a public records request through, they found the sheriff had not sent data to the county since the early days of the pandemic when they issued over a dozen public health order warnings and cited or arrested eight people back in April. In May there were a handful of warnings and arrests related to criminal activity that included some violations of the health order. There were also complaints about a church that a deputy said weren't there which went against a code enforcement write up. The Board of Supervisors cites numerous complaints and not a citation to match them.

The state can start to administer more vaccines as tier groups open up, but doses don't come in. Starting the middle of March, anyone 16 to 64 with some kind of underlying condition could get the shots. Supplies are limited though, so it's up to local jurisdictions to decide. Some parts of the state are not vaccinating some groups because they don't have the inventory. Some vaccine sites were even closing in the state due to a lack of supplies. The Press Democrat reports almost 220,000 doses arrived last week and half are needed as second shots. The federal government has announced buying 600 million doses of both approved vaccines which we should have in hand before the end of July.

It's been a minute since the Ukiah Valley Groundwater Sustainability Agency's board met. 3 months ago, to be exact. Last week they held their first meeting of the new year which included adding new board members, adopting some new rules and a discussion on getting access to a couple of parcels of land so the groundwater monitoring network can be expanded. By state law they have to be prepared to fully regulate and manage groundwater usage by June 2022. The water, which comes from wells, has in the past been treated as private property. But that's all changing so that aquifers and well water are managed locally and with the California Department of Water Resources (DWR).

Police in Ukiah report on a recent uptick in car theft attempts ... Mendo Fever reports there was a string of attempted vehicle burglaries on Crestview Drive last Thursday night. Police reminding residents to keep your cars locked and to call them if you see anything suspicious in your area. They're asking anyone who may have seen something or if you have video of the same to give them a call. Your call can be anonymous.

Ahead of Valentines Day PG&E was reminding to be cautious with metallic and other balloons. Apparently if they get close to overhead power lines, they can disrupt electric service, cause property damage and could lead to serious injuries. Last year there were over 450 power outages related to balloons, none of those in Lake or Mendocino counties though. But they were in PG&E territory, a 30 percent increase in balloon-caused outages from 2019. The utility company reported balloon-related outages in their top 5 cities of distribution were Bakersfield, San Jose, Oakland, Stockton and San Francisco.

A man from Covelo's been arrested for having a concealed Dirk or Dagger. Police say someone called from a local business to report Neil Waldron was causing a disturbance. When a deputy made contact with Waldron he found he was on probation so he searched. That's when he found the weapon, along with a glass methamphetamine smoking pipe. He was then arrested for violating probation, having the Dirk/Dagger and possession of drug paraphernalia. His bail was set at zero and he was released due to the current COVID-19 emergency order.

02/16/21

Those of you who've received your first vaccination dose of the COVID-19 Pfizer vaccine can sign up for your second dose. It's for folks who went to the Ukiah Fairgrounds on January 27th through 29th. You can now register to get the final dose through the county's website under the community tab, then navigate to coronavirus. The events are tomorrow and Thursday at the fairgrounds again. Tomorrow is 9 – 4 and Thursday is 9 to 12. Follow the county on Facebook and Twitter or visit the county website for the most current vaccination information.

Last Chance Grade on the 101 in Del Norte County is still closed. On Saturday the road was shut down due to a landslide, then reopened briefly, and closed again. Both sides of the highway remain closed indefinitely. The CalTrans roadmap says emergency work is ongoing and the highway is fully closed at Last Chance Grade. It also says once it does reopen, there could be 30 minute delays. Crews are on the scene removing debris and mud off the road. They say as soon as the slide stops moving they can reopen.

Hundreds of millions of dollars of rent is still unpaid in Calif. due to the pandemic. President Biden's administration just announced an extension for unpaid mortgages until June, but renters will, at some point, need to pay back what they haven't paid. The Press Democrat reports over one million renters are behind in payments to the tune of about \$3.7 billion dollars, as of December. The news site reports the average rent debt is around \$3,400. In Sonoma County as a whole, there's rent debt of \$36.5 million. The North Bay Organizing Project a group of over 22 organizations representing working class and minority communities started a hotline to help. They say they've been inundated with calls about evictions. The State Rental Assistance Program was started by lawmakers to help people and businesses with \$2.6 billion in federal stimulus money for those who cannot pay rent due to COVID-related economic losses.

Blue Shield of Calif. now tasked with managing vaccine distribution across the state says it's creating an algorithm with hopes of 3 million shots in arms/week by March 1st. The contract with the state was made public yesterday. The company says it's going to seriously ramp up the number of daily shots, but it also depends on how many doses the state gets from the federal government. Over the last week the state got just over 1 million vaccine doses. The insurance carrier says it's going to work right away to speed up distribution after a slow rollout because of a lack of vaccines, serious red tape and data reporting issues. The new algorithm is supposed to prioritize vaccine distribution in an equitable fashion.

The city of San Francisco is suing its public schools due to a high rate of suicidal children. The City Attorney Dennis Herrera announced the lawsuit last week against the city's school district which includes testimony from local hospitals, doctors and parents on the emotional and mental toll one year of distance learning has had on kids. Some of the testimony includes teens crying themselves to sleep, or younger children having "uncontrollable meltdowns", "depression and anger". Local emergency rooms are reported record numbers of suicidal children being treated and doctors saying there's been a marked increase in anxiety, depression and eating disorders, consistent with national data.

Grants are being distributed by a state charitable foundation for multiple projects. The Anderson Marsh Interpretive Association is one of 15 state parks and park partners receiving awards from the Calif. State Parks Foundation to bring parks and fragile habitats back to life that may have been damaged or destroyed in fires. The \$135,000 in grants comes from the new Wildfire Resiliency and Prevention Fund. 15 parks will get some of the money, 10 of them are in Northern Calif areas devastated by wildfires.

The Anderson Marsh Interpretive Association is getting just over \$9,000 to restore and rehab the 3 acre entrance area which was blackened by the 2016 Clayton fire.

A memorial is being considered by the Clearlake City Council to honor those who've lost their lives due to the pandemic. The city council will take up the matter at their meeting Thursday after a budget workshop. That's where they're reviewing the midyear budget. The city's police chief is also the interim finance director. In his report to the council he says the revenues are exceeding projections and says they're cautiously optimistic the trend will continue. Councilwoman Joyce Overton came up with the idea to establish a COVID-19 victim memorial at Austin Park with the names of those who've died in a fenced rose garden with a small white cross. It would be funded with private donations and be temporary for now.

The Lake County Board of Supervisors will continue limiting in person services to the public and keep the chambers closed during meetings due to the pandemic. The board didn't meet last week due to the Presidents Day holiday. But they've agreed to keep the temporary closures in place and a reduction of in-person county services. The resolution to be reviewed monthly until the board decides it's safe to resume operations. Last time they met, the County Administrative Officer Carol Huchingson said very few county employees have been vaccinated so far. They meet again next Tuesday.

A boy reported missing from near the Hidden Valley Lake area has been found safe. The Lake County Sheriff's Office reported the boy disappeared Sunday afternoon and his family called about 4 hours after he was last seen. He was found about 24 hrs later, yesterday afternoon. 12 year old Austin Maloney was seen in the area of Jerusalem Grade Road near Hidden Valley Lake Sunday afternoon after an argument or disagreement with his family. The Sheriff's office, California Highway Patrol and volunteers and other law enforcement agencies were looking for the boy who was found in the area where he was reportedly last seen.

A former music teacher at Kelseyville High accused of having sex with a student has been to court, again. Then the court will decide if Cory Cunningham should get probation or be sentenced to state prison. The hearing was virtual with his lawyer asking for a continuance for further discussions with Cunningham but apparently, he wanted to be sentenced right away, so that's reset for tomorrow. He changed his plea to no contest as part of a deal to have some of the charges tossed. It was agreed he was eligible for home monitoring and it's in the hands of the county Probation Department for a Sentencing Report. The former teacher was accused of having a relationship with a 17 year old student.

A new report shows it's not been an equitable distribution of the COVID19 vaccine in the state. The Calif. Dept. of Public Health has released data showing White Californians getting the majority of doses, nearly 33% of the first available shots. Then it was 16% for Latinos, 13% for Asians, just under 3% for Black Californians and only 0.3% for Native populations. The report broke down the vaccine recipients by age, race, gender and where they live. Health care workers, long-term-care residents and people over 65 were the largest chunk of the population. And as of Sunday, there were 8,051,475 vaccine doses delivered and almost 5,770,000 doses administered. The state reports over 8 million more doses have been shipped.

A man from Covelo found to be on probation, found with drugs. Sheriff's deputies say they conducted a traffic stop for a vehicle code violation in Willits Sunday morning. The driver was Timothy Davis who was found to be on probation. Plus he didn't have a driver's license. He had a passenger with him. Deputies recognized the two of them. Since Davis was on parole he could be searched. They say they found he had a holster for a firearm, but they didn't find a gun. He also had five individually packaged containers of suspected meth with a total weight of 16.4 grams, there was also a digital scale with a white crystal residue on it, and a used glass pipe. He's charged with violating his parole, possessing drugs for sale and transporting them. He was booked into jail on \$25,000.00 bail.

A man from Willits has been arrested for a felony arrest warrant. The Sheriff's dept. reports seeing Joseph Hipes Monday afternoon and knowing he was wanted for violating parole, so he was picked up without incident. Hipes was taken to jail and held on \$15,000.00 bail.

Congressman Mike Thompson has hosted another town hall over Zoom. This time he was talking about a new COVID19 relief bill that is supposed to be voted on next week. Thompson is supporting President Biden's \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package and says it needs to be implemented ASAP. It is supposed to bring relief to cities and states, as well as individuals and businesses. The congressman's office says it will bring tens of millions of dollars to his district. It includes \$350 billion for local governments to use for vaccines, replacing lost money and helping businesses. He says local representatives have been lobbying him for several months to get more direct aid to individuals too. Since there was a call for a \$2,000 payment and it only came to be \$600, individuals should get that additional \$1,400 in this package.

02/17/21



The state inspector general says prisons are still riddled with complaints about staff misconduct. After over 98% of prison employees were exonerated by their local wardens, the inspector general's office says the process remains broken, nor is it independent or fair. Inspector General Roy Wesley sent a letter to the governor and lawmakers with an update on new processes taking on misconduct, but it showed of more than 50,000 inmate grievances over 95% were not considered staff misconduct by wardens. A total of 541 were forwarded to a new investigation unit and only 86 were further investigated.

Could more business restrictions be lifted now that coronavirus cases and hospitalizations are down? The Governor says parts of the state are beginning to open back up and that more counties will be allowed to reopen next week. The governor was in Los Angeles yesterday at a new federally supported mass vaccination site. That site opened the same day as the Oakland Coliseum. The two are expected to get about 6,000 vaccine doses/day. Gov. Newsom says the state has about a 3.5% positivity rate currently. So it appears rural counties in Northern California and elsewhere will enter the red or orange tier. Mendocino and Lake remain in the Purple, widespread tier.

The contract with a recruitment company has been extended in Lakeport after being tabled during the pandemic. The Retail Coach was hired in 2019 so they could try to retain the businesses in the city and work on bring in new ones. During the pandemic, that was a chore, so they stopped their work. This week the city council voted to re-up with the company after they already assessed the city and began some work with existing retailers. The company says the city of about 5,000 people gets a lot of business from others who don't live in the city, including for work, shopping and medical appointments. The company is extending their contract this year as the second year instead of last year and brought down their price about \$5,000 to \$25,000.

The prescribed burn to start the restoration work at the Anderson Marsh State Historic Park is set to begin. As we reported yesterday, the Anderson Marsh Interpretive Association won a grant from the state for wildfire damaged beautification. So weather permitting the prescribed burn will take place Saturday as part of the work to restore the three acre entry meadow which was burned by the Clayton fire in 2016. The prescribed burn is part of the project to restore wildlife habitat as well as remove any invasive weeds or diseased soil and replace it. And to work to reduce the chance of another catastrophic wildfire.

The City of Fort Bragg has a new city council member. Fellow council members voted unanimously for Marcia Rafanan Meadlin to be the new member, over eight other candidates. She's also a member of the Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians. Her historic swearing in will take place Monday at the next regular council meeting. She's going to take the rest of the term of Will Lee who resigned after moving out of the area. She also got several letters of support for her candidacy. Meadlin's application says her family's been in Fort Bragg since before it was even named. She has a small restaurant in town, works with local schools, the elderly and helps the homeless and developmentally disabled.

State Senator Mike McGuire's having an online town hall meeting on the Great Redwood Trail, the proposed 300 mile trail from Marin to Humboldt he's been championing. McGuire describes it as converting a decaying railway into a world-class destination for hikers, cyclists and nature lovers. The town hall will look at his long-term vision, how it will be a boon to the local economy and next steps for getting it built and operational. When it's done, McGuire says it will be the longest rail-trail in America surrounded by rolling oak woodlands, rugged and remote North Coast river canyons, and old growth redwood forests. To attend Thursday's virtual town hall, contact McGuire's office.

Plans for more school reopenings in Mendocino County. The Charter School Association of Willits says teachers that wanted it, have had their vaccines. They're gathering parent surveys to see if parents want their children back in person. There will be two in person cohorts of six students in kindergarten and another on Zoom. The groups that are in person will go 5 days a week. First grade kids parents have said they'd like their students there two full days, so they're considering two five-hour days a week on site. But second thru fifth graders are apparently up for continuing their distance learning, but have enrichment activities and/or tutoring two days/week for two hours/day on campus. Willits Charter is bringing back 6th graders mid March.

An unconscious man found in Willits. Police say he was in the driver seat of a car, and they noticed a meth pipe and drugs nearby. Keegan Knight was awoken and detained by police who also found he was on active post release community supervision for possession of a controlled substance while armed. Since he was on parole, there was a search and officers found about a pound of suspected methamphetamine, a large amount of heroin, DMT, Xanax, and suspected counterfeit OxyContin pills, ammunition and other items connected to drug dealing. They also found he had a stolen federal law enforcement badge. He was arrested on 8 felony charges including transportation and sale of a controlled substance, possession of stolen property and being a convicted felon in possession of controlled substances.

It looks like the recall effort against Gov. Gavin Newsom could land on a mail in ballot. The possible recall gets on the ballot after organizers gather enough signatures so now we wait to hear what the Secretary of State's office says about all of the signatures. Like the presidential election, all mail in ballots will go out to every voter in the state for a potential recall and any other election. The Legislature approved of mail in elections last year because of the pandemic. And yesterday, they did the same. The Secretary of State's Office has reportedly pegged the election at over \$7 million dollars for the recall if it qualifies for the ballot. The bill passed by lawmakers for mail in elections will only apply to this year though. It heads to the governor's desk next.

A new city manager has been named in Point Arena. The City Council voted to promote Paul Andersen to lead the city after Richard Shoemaker retired. Andersen has been a city employee since 2016. He was last the Deputy City Manager. Now he takes on the city's daily operations and works with the council on their goals and objectives. He was also a legislative aide for former Congressman Dan Hamburg, has worked on multiple campaigns, served himself as a Council Member, and has represented employees for public-sector unions. He says he's honored to be the Point Arena City Manager and is looking forward to working with the City Council, staff and the "community at large to provide the best possible service to residents and make meaningful positive changes to their quality of life."

In Santa Rosa they're not starting school as many others across the state are. The Press Democrat reports the Santa Rosa City Schools Superintendent says the target date of restarting in person learning of March 1st is not doable. Apparently union negotiations on getting back on campus have been zeroing in on getting teachers vaccines. Plus, in Santa Rosa campuses are not ready to be pandemic proof. They also don't have a way to match students with teachers quite yet. Since last month they have been trying to at least get transitional kindergarten through third graders back part-time. The superintendent says they are about 90% done with figuring it all out and knows it's a disappointment to local families.

02/18/21

The Lakeport City Council has heard from the chief of police on crime statistics. Chief Brad Rasmussen updated the council at their regular meeting Tuesday. He says last year they got 5,820 calls for service with nearly 9,100 incidents, 300 fewer than a year before. He added the pandemic had something to do with that. He says the department made over 70 felony arrests and 174 misdemeanor arrests, about half of 2019. And only about a half of the number of DUI's from the year before. There was only murder. The chief says they're also training in various topics within the department but are facing staffing issues. A couple of new officers just finished the academy though and they're trying to recruit more.

The Lake County Public Health Dept. has announced they've had to cancel some vaccination clinics due to severe weather in other parts of the country. Dr. Gary Pace put out a statement that says because of the severe weather events, the delivery of their shipment of the Moderna vaccine is delayed. So, unfortunately, that means they have to cancel all appointments today and tomorrow. They will be getting more doses in the next few days, and after that they can resume their vaccine clinics, probably Monday. They say they'll be calling anyone with an appointment to reschedule for next week. Second vaccine doses will continue though. So for anyone who had their first dose 4 weeks ago, they need to get a jab this week. But locations and days have changed, so you should check in with the department to confirm.

The Calif. Legislature is working on a stimulus package separate from the federal government. President Biden is proposing \$1,400 direct payments to all Americans of a certain income bracket and help to counties and states and businesses. Calif. lawmakers and coalitions of immigrant advocates are reportedly pushing for stimulus payments since they never received anything from the federal government. President Biden's proposal is \$1.9 trillion dollars and Gov. Newsom's is \$2.4 billion and could include \$600 tax refunds to about 4 million workers who earn less than \$30,000, including some undocumented workers. Many of them work in industries devastated by the pandemic and don't qualify for other help.

The Gov. has called for an end to fracking in the state so Democratic State Sen. Scott Wiener has introduced a bill to do just that. It wouldn't happen, if it's even passed, until 2027. Hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, pulls oil and gas from shale rock that's deep underground using a high-pressure mix of water, sand or gravel along with chemicals. There are apparently threats to the environment by doing this, and some believe it can create earthquakes. The bill faces an unlikely outcome with the influential oil and gas industry which pays billions in state and local taxes.

A promotion has been announced by the Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency of a long time employee. Mary Alice Willeford will be the Interim Public Health Director. The Public Health Office put out a statement yesterday that Willeford has been a county employee for 19 years and working within Public Health for the past six years. The office says Willeford has years of fiscal and administrative expertise and wide-ranging skills working in Public Health. She says she's dedicated to providing services to the community and excited to take on the new role. She is not a doctor or nurse, but the office says her vast experience is the perfect match for what they need to augment their team. She starts in her new role Monday.

A state lawmaker is introducing a bill to decriminalize psychedelics in the state. Like Oregon before it, State Senator Scott Wiener says he hopes to follow the lead of other places which have decriminalized these drugs as medicine. Wiener told the newspaper the Guardian, it's a health issue, not a criminal issue, and nobody should go to jail for possessing these drugs. The bill would decriminalize possession and personal use of psilocybin, or magic mushrooms, psilocyn, also found in mushrooms, and MDMA, LSD, ketamine, DMT, mescaline and ibogaine, which is used to counter drug addiction. The drugs are all used as medical treatments. The bill would also clear the criminal record of anyone convicted of possession or personal use of these substances and create a taskforce and regulatory body to oversee personal and therapeutic use for mental health treatment.

Volunteers are needed at the Ukiah Hospice Thrift and Gift Store. The store is located on the corner of South State and East Clay. They raise money there to help hospice provide end of life and comfort care for free to anyone who needs it in the community. The executive director says they're all volunteers. They get about 75% of what they earn from the Thrift Store. The rest comes in from donations. They do have four paid staffers for hospice. They also have a library which managed by a retired school teacher, a toy house, tool room, boutique and more. The hospice is certified in Willits and Ukiah.

Reopenings or moving to a new tier comes each Tuesday. And while Lake and Mendocino counties are still in the purple, widespread tier, we won't find out if there's any progress forward from the state until next Tuesday. Mendocino County added another death on Tuesday, for a total of 41 now. There have also been 3,524 cases. The state had 388 deaths Tuesday, the last day the data was updated. But hospitalizations and case numbers are down. Gov. Newsom has hinted there could be major changes to the tier color each county is in with the next update, next Tuesday.

A new variant of COVID-19 is in Humboldt County. Public Health officials say it was just a single outbreak and so far there's no evidence of community spread. Apparently the public health office had submitted several dozen samples for testing. They including random surveillance samples. The scientists testing the samples found 16 of them had a mutation which could mean a higher rate of transmission. But the Humboldt County Health Officer reported it was at one nursing facility in Eureka where the virus had spread in residents and staff, but nowhere else in the county so far. The scientists say the strain is a natural feature amongst viruses and not unexpected to find in outbreaks.

If you haven't got it yet, you're going to have get your REAL ID now. Last year the federal government gave everyone an extension to get their REAL ID's due to the pandemic. The new deadline is this October, instead of last October. The DMV is expecting a bunch of applications this summer, so it's best not to wait they say, especially if you want to travel within the continental United States. You will not be able to take any domestic flights without that ID or you'll need your passport and also to enter a federal building. The DMV recently upgraded its website to handle the expected influx of applicants.

Added to the priority list for those able to get the COVID19 vaccine in Calif., Medical Marijuana workers and veterinarians. The state Department of Public Health announced Cannabis industry employees were included in Phase 1a for medicinal cannabis and Phase 1b which includes Food and Agriculture workers, for growing, production, storage, transport and distribution. It's a tad confusing as the same workers appear in Phase 1b, Tier 1. But individual counties get to decide who goes when depending on supply of course. The San Francisco Chronicle reports the state dept. of Public Health says many medical marijuana workers were already vaccinated in Phase 1a, so whoever is left will probably be in the next tier group.

Lawmakers have agreed on a multibillion dollar proposal for school to restart in person in the spring. The \$6.5 billion proposal apparently doesn't go far enough or happen fast enough for Governor Newsom's taste. That's a direct quote from the Gov. who could veto the bill, not sign it, which makes it law anyway or approve it. The Assembly Budget chair though says they think it's the right plan which will encourage the most schools to open up. Schools cannot be forced to have in person learning, but the new Safe and Open Schools plan approved by the Legislature will give schools more leeway in when they open, and money to do it. School officials don't like the Governor's blueprint for reopening though which he announced in December. The new plan gives \$2 billion to reopen this academic year and \$4.5 billion until next fall to extend the school year, increase the school day

02/19/21 or other expenses after lost learning during the pandemic.

There's a new committee in Ukiah on Equity and Diversity. It's a spinoff from the City Council to make sure all demographics in the city are represented. They still need a couple more representatives, one to represent seniors and the other for those whose primary language is not English. The first meeting is next month. So far there are seven others, Denise Gorny on behalf of those currently or that had formerly lived at or below the poverty level, Xochilt J. Morales de Martinez for those with physical or mental disabilities, Darren Jackson to represent the LGBTQA community, Les Marston for Native American tribes and communities in Mendocino County, Susan Stern on behalf of the Hispanic-Latino community, Jani Sheppard to represent People of Color, Troyle Tognoli for Youth 21 years and younger.

The Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians is asking to meet with CalFire on the Jackson State Forest logging plan. They also want the Jackson State Forest Manager Mike Powers to be there for a government to government meeting on proposed timber harvest plans and on the Tribe's ancestral territory. The request was sent Tuesday by the Tribal Chair. The procedure came out of an Executive Order by President Clinton in 2000 for United States governments to confer directly with sovereign tribal nations. The Tribal Chair's letter said they're concerned about their land, the cumulative impact of logging on carbon sequestration during dire climate change; native plants, medicines and foods and the overall threat posed by the proposed logging to the "health of the forest and the critters big and small who live there".

Out of nowhere the Lake County Public Health officer announced he's leaving. The abrupt announcement made by Dr. Gary Pace in a meeting with local leaders yesterday. Lake Co News reports the Clearlake City Manager confirmed the news. He also announced it at their City Council meeting last night, calling it disappointing. So now the city needs to look for a new public health officer before Pace leaves, which will be this spring, possibly in April. Pace has only been Lake County's Public Health officer for 16 months. Lake County Board of Supervisors Chair Bruno Sabatier says the item will be on their agenda Tuesday. Pace will no doubt be at the meeting as he gives the board his COVID19 update each week.

Hybrid schooling is coming to Fort Bragg next week. There will be some in person learning for kids, but only k-6th grade in alignment with the state dept. of Public Health's guidance. 7th-12th graders cannot get back to any in person learning until Mendocino County is in the Red Tier, or less than seven positive COVID-19 cases/day, per 100,000 residents, for five consecutive days. The Mendocino Unified School District Superintendent has said there are so far no plans to reopen but they're working towards March or April. The Fort Bragg School District Board of Trustees voted last week for Preschool, TK, 3rd and 6th grades back onto campus Monday. First, 2nd, 4th and 5th graders will return March 1st, a week later.

Pacific Gas and Electric hears from customers on their wildfire prevention plans and what the year 2020 brought. A senior manager with the utility in the online community meeting says even during the pandemic, they've been doing everything the utility had been planning to "address the threat of catastrophic wildfires". Amidst the pandemic she says, it was a very difficult year in Calif. not only the virus, but record breaking heat, rotating power outages and the wildfire season. The company said they'd be continuing their work with customers to keep communities safe. They have new weather stations, cameras, they opened community resource centers for those without power while following state and county public health protocols. They're also strengthening their electric system with stronger poles, covered power lines and targeted undergrounding.

Another week of high unemployment claims in the state. There were nearly 160,000 new claims for unemployment for the week ending Feb. 13th. That number climbed by over 20,600 from the week before. The initial claims this past week were the highest in a month. Across the country, 861,000 Americans filed initial jobless claims last week, up 13,000 from the previous week. Calif. has 18.4% of all unemployment claims filed in the United States. Claims have been high since mid-March 2020 due to the pandemic and lockdowns to slow the spread of coronavirus.

### [The state has a new portal for businesses struggling to survive during the ecc](#)

After it got out that the Lake County Public Health Officer Dr. Gary Pace is leaving his position, he put out an official statement. Dr. Pace says it was a difficult decision to resign and that his official last day will be in mid April. He says he's prepared to continue providing support after that time, if needed. He went on to say that serving Lake County during the COVID-19 pandemic was one of the most rewarding experiences and greatest challenges of his career and that especially over the last 11 months, he gave everything he had the capacity to give. Dr. Pace had been a family physician for over 20 years and will return to clinical practice in coming months. He says while he won't be the public health officer anymore, he looks forward to being part of the broader pandemic response, and helping to see patients through the days ahead.

It's happening. After nearly a year after the coronavirus pandemic started, schools in Ukiah are reopening for hybrid learning. The Superintendent of Schools announced this a couple of weeks ago, then confirmed over the weekend that grades 3 – 6 are starting today. It's up to parents if their children go in person or continue online learning. The Superintendent says in either case, they're committed to putting out the best education possible for all children. 7th – 12th graders won't be able to come back to class until Mendocino County is in the Red Tier. We remain in the Purple, most widespread Tier currently. School administrators are going to start calling parents of those grades soon to see what they prefer, in person or at home. For in person, children must wear a mask, remember to wash hands or use sanitizer frequently, physically distance and parents should continue screening for possible symptoms at home. One other thing, no Parents and Guardians are allowed on campus without an appointment and have to stay inside their cars during drop-off and pick-up.

02/22/21

The Lake County Public Health Office says there are encouraging signs about coronavirus infections. Dr. Gary Pace, who will address the Board of Supervisors tomorrow as they discuss his recent announcement of leaving his job, says there were 88 new infections since the last announcement. Down, he says, from a peak of 292, for the weekly period ending January 3. The daily case rate is at about 20/100,000. So the county remains in the Purple, widespread Tier. The case rate needs to be down below 7/100,000 to hit the less restrictive Red Tier for two straight weeks before advancing to the less restrictive tier. Then more business activity could restart including indoor dining. Vaccine doses are trickling in due to severe winter weather last week across the country. By this Friday the county will have no more vaccine does.

A scary report from Ukiah police about a man leering at and following a woman and her two kids at Walmart. The woman called her husband who called police who confirmed the man was a registered sex offender on parole. But they say since nothing criminal happened, only his parole officer was called, and he was released. Police went to the store and talked with the man and interviewed the mom. Police say even though the guy was being “creepy”, they found there was no criminal offense.

Firefighters called out to a fire along with some heard explosions in Redwood Valley. Last night around 7:45 p.m. firefighters reported to what they called the Baker Incident, finding a “fully involved structure” but nobody inside. It was apparently a barn and within a half hour, the fire was controlled. Soon after PG&E came to the scene to cut service to the property. Firefighters remained on the scene for mop up for several hours after.

A rare sight on the Sonoma Coast. A dead pygmy sperm whale had washed ashore over the weekend. These whales normally live deep down in the ocean. The Press Democrat reports this was a nine-foot-long whale that beached Saturday at Salmon Creek, and had no clear signs of trauma, but she was apparently pregnant. The Marine Mammal Center from Sausalito reported to the scene. They say it’s rare because if one dies they don’t usually strand themselves on land and seeing one is very rare. Several scientists descended on the beach to take samples and the whale’s internal organs to study at their marine mammal hospital to see how it died.

The Gov. says yes, the vaccine rollout has been riddled with errors getting it to the Latino and Black communities in California. Gov. Newsom has been traveling to various vaccination sites over the last days. He was last at a mobile vaccination clinic in Inglewood and said they need to “do more and do better” with outreach and set up more sites inside the communities who were hardest hit by the virus. Out of over 7 million doses administered in California, less than 3% have been given to Black residents, more though to Latinos, but still only 16% and only 13% to Asian Americans. White vaccine recipients measured at just under 33%.

The governor has announced the state will hold 10% of first vaccine doses for educators, school staff and childcare providers. Starting next month the vaccine doses will be held for that group so kids can get back to school after almost a year of online learning. The announcement over the weekend after lawmakers announced their own plan, a \$6.5 billion proposal to reopen schools. Newsom has remarked it’s not enough money and it’s not quick enough, stating it wouldn’t allow the safe reopening of schools for the youngest kids until the middle of April, which is nearly the end of the school year. He’s hinted he might veto the bill. Lawmakers were planning to discuss the bill starting today.

The Lake County BOS is taking up the resignation of the Public Health Officer Dr. Gary Pace. Last week, Pace announced he’d resign around mid-April, so tomorrow at their regular weekly meeting, they’ll discuss recruiting a new public health officer. Pace had been the interim health officer for a couple months and took the job full time, in October 2019, just before the pandemic hit. The County Administrative Officer’s report to the board says the resignation is official on April 16th and Pace could stay on a bit longer, under contract, during the transition. The board will also consider another extension to the temporary closure of in-person county services until the county gets to the Red Tier on the state’s Blueprint for a Safer Economy.



A man from Lakeport has been arrested a day after he was released from jail. Lake Co News reports Clearlake and Lakeport police partnered in the arrest of 28 year old Austin Schweitzer last Wednesday for possession of a large amount of suspected meth and being under the influence of narcotics. The next day he was accused of stealing a car left running to get warm in Lakeport. The car also had a bunch of credit cards inside that were taken. The car was left in Clearlake, police say, while he tried using some of those cards, but he didn't get far. Police were called, the car got back to its owner and Schweitzer was arrested again. He was found with the keys to the car and stolen credit cards and held on credit card theft, car theft and possession of a stolen vehicle and first-degree burglary.

High school football and other outdoor sports can restart. It's been almost a year since youth sports were allowed. The Calif. Dept. of Public Health made the announcement Friday allowing football, baseball, softball, soccer, water polo and lacrosse and many more. But it's only allowed in counties that have less than 14/100,000 coronavirus cases for two weeks straight. That's almost half the 58 counties. Apparently indoor sports is still not allowed. And higher contact sports will have to follow strict new protocols, including a weekly testing program.

It'll be a busy meeting of the Lake County BOS. Besides considering an extension to no in person county services and recruiting a new public health officer, at tomorrow's meeting, the board will read a Proclamation, "Promoting Tolerance, Respect, Equity and Inclusion in Lake County." The Record Bee reports it's just one of several actions the board intends to take after the murders of both George Floyd and Brianna Taylor in 2020. A local group, A Community Call to Action: A loving response to systemic racism in America (CCA) suggested the move after monthly meetings with various guest speakers. They then gathered ideas for areas of response and learning what other communities across the nation were doing. Part of Lake's proclamation says each of us can contribute to a "tolerant, respectful, equitable and inclusive Lake County... and showing up, and voicing your support for Tuesday's Proclamation, is a great way to start."

The Mendocino County Public Health Officer says they're still looking into a major outbreak of COVID19 at an assisted living facility in Ukiah. Dr. Andy Coren says he's looking into what strains may have infected residents and staff there after 30 people were infected. Dr. Coren says the infection spread easily there so he's concerned it might have been one of the more transmissible variants of the virus that hit Mountain View. During his regular Friday press call, Coren said 23 residents and 7 seven staffers had tested positive for the virus. Two of the residents had to be hospitalized, and one died early last week. He also said most of the cases were in people vaccinated with their first dose. Coren said the other outbreaks that were recently announced were mostly resolved. Those included the restaurant workers in Fort Bragg, an outbreak in Round Valley, and at the Mendocino County jail, but there are still 2 cases there. There have been almost 3,800 COVID19 cases in the county and 43 deaths.

For over a decade kids that had once gone to elementary schools in the Ukiah Unified School District had to take a bus for a couple hours. The students parents had to pick them up or arrange other transportation too, after the school district closed Hopland and Redwood Valley Elementary Schools in June of 2010. Last month the board approved by wide margins, a new charter school for transitional kindergarten thru 6th graders. The Shanél (Sanel) Valley Academy Charter School would be located at the old Hopland School site. And they're accepting applications for both students and teachers. The Daily Journal reports recent data shows more than 120 students go to schools in the Ukiah School District, but they live in Hopland and another 100 go to charter and private schools in Ukiah or in Sonoma County.

A tentative deal has been made by California lawmakers and thousands of childcare providers to get one-time stipends and paid-days off during the pandemic. The Senate Budget Committee approved the move last week which is expected to be approved by the full Legislature in just days. \$144 million in federal funds will go into the economic recovery package that the governor announced for \$9.6 billion. The new union Child Care Providers United formed after almost 2 decades of organizing. The union's vice chair tells Education Source, this will be a huge relief for providers. The agreement gives a one time stipend of \$525 per child in subsidized care as of Nov. 2020, 16 more paid days off related to COVID19 and creates a working group of state and union representatives to lobby for more money from the federal CARES Act and a waiver of family fees and support for providers who shut down.

02/23/21

A new doctor has been hired at Adventist Health Howard Memorial. Dr. Yoshihiro Katsuura, a spine surgeon spent time in the region as a medical student and says he feels like he's home. He says he showed up on a whim one day after a friend in medical school said to check out the hospital, and he kept checking in for ten years. He worked at Howard over the years as a volunteer and in the Emergency department. He says the time spent there inspired him to become an orthopedic surgeon. He's now seeing patients in Willits at the Redwood Medical Clinic.

A man accused of a triple murder at the Bear River Rancheria has been arraigned in Utah where he was caught. Mauricio Sanchez-Johnson is accused in the February 10th murder. Two people found shot to death and third found with severe injuries died at a hospital. One of them was reported to be his friend, 16 year old Shelly Mae Autumn Moon, her mom, Margaret Lee Moon and Margaret's fiancé Nikki Dion Metcalf. There were also 2 uninjured children in the home. The Sheriff's dept. says he ran from Humboldt County that night and ended up in Utah. He's held there without bail. He was arrested on I-80 with another man Von Eric Keener. They're both held there until they can be extradited back to Humboldt County.

Lawmakers had been considering a \$600 direct payment to several million people for coronavirus relief who have low to moderate incomes. 5.7 million people are set to get a \$600 one-time payment. Gov. Gavin Newsom has indicated he'll sign it into law today. State lawmakers are trying to get stimulus payments to residents who didn't get money from the federal government, that includes non-citizens. Those eligible will get the payment within 45 to 60 days after they get their state tax refunds. The Legislature has also been working on a bigger relief package, approved yesterday including over \$2 billion in grants for small businesses, waives around \$25.6 million in business fees for struggling restaurants and hair salons, gives \$30 million to food banks and another \$5 million for diaper banks.

Mendocino County is opening up the next tier for vaccinations. Now 1B joins tier 1A so that those over 75 years old, EMS, School and Childcare Staff, and Food and Agricultural workers can get their shots. There are actually two tiers within a tier, so this second tier, part one, includes ag workers in growing, harvesting, production, preparing, selling, cooking and serving food products, cannabis and lumber. So yesterday those groups started to be able to get their vaccines. You have to bring identification with you, possibly a pay stub, business card or receipt proving your eligibility. Then starting March 15th, the next tier group includes people with underlying medical conditions including Cancer, Diabetes, heart disease, immune diseases, severely obese and sickle cell disease among many more.

More vaccine doses have arrived in Lake County. The Public Health Office reports the severe weather last week across the country delayed supply and therefore vaccination clinics. But this week and last week's supplies were received yesterday so first dose clinics will resume tomorrow from 10am-4pm, at Lakeport Auto Movies, the same for Thursday, then Friday at Redbud Park, also from 10am-4pm. They expect to restart their regular schedule next week which is Monday/Tuesday in Lakeport; Thursday/Friday in Clearlake. They ask that you do not show up without an appointment. Right now they're still in Tier 1A. More vaccines will be sent to North Lake Pharmacy, Safeway Pharmacy, Adventist Health, Lakeview Health Center for second doses only and Sutter Health, also for second doses. The Public Health Officer says to call them direct to see if they have any open appointments.

Another virtual meetup with state Sen. Mike McGuire. This time, tomorrow, the Senator is hosting a chat with tourism leaders and those in the hospitality industry on the road to reopening. The meeting is tomorrow at 4pm. If you want to attend, you must get in touch with McGuire's office. Along with McGuire, participants include the president and CEO of Visit California; a couple of union leaders, one who works at Disneyland and another at Santa Clara County Convention Center and the CEO/film commissioner for Visit Yosemite. As we've experienced the state's hospitality and tourism sectors are some of the largest economic drivers for the state and the pandemic has devastated the industries.

A drive-by shooting is being investigated in Lakeport. Police say they got notice yesterday morning, someone saying a car drove past and shot into the house multiple times. The car was described as a dark-colored sedan. The police chief says there were no injuries in the home and they do not believe it was random shooting. They're asking neighbors if they know anything to come forward, they did get some tips and are looking into them. They ask anyone else with info to please call the police department, the call can be anonymous. You can also send them a Facebook message.

The governor says the state's new system to deliver, track and schedule coronavirus vaccines is first coming to some counties before it rolls out across the state after the labored rollout of the national supply. The Gov. had announced that Blue Shield would be managing a new centralized system so vaccines are distributed quickly and equitably. The ten counties that are part of the new system are transitioning over to the Blue Shield system this week. They're located in inland sections of central and Southern California. One will move into the system later than the other nine. The state's public health agency says the state and Blue Shield have been working tirelessly so the state more efficiently and equitably administers vaccines.

A young woman reporting missing from Ukiah has been found safe. 24-year-old Hailey Turner was reporting missing earlier this week, reportedly suffering from psychosis. Mendo Fever reports her step-mother confirmed to them that Hailey was being treated at Ukiah Recovery Center and they changed the medication she'd been on, then when they tried to hospitalize her at some point she got away from staff and disappeared. Stepmom says the 24 year old has schizoaffective disorder and has been treated for it for years. She's been living in Lake County under a conservatorship with Lake County Adult Services and for 18 months was being treated in Angwin at a clinic and moved to Ukiah Recovery earlier this month. Last night it was reported that Hailey had been found and was receiving medical care.

02/24/21

A milestone.... Last week the 10,000th dose of a COVID19 vaccine was administered at Adventist Health. They're now at over 11,000 doses for not only their own staff, but also community members. They've been having mass vaccination clinics, the latest last Thursday where 720 community members over 70 got a shot within a six hour period. Then another 350 on Sunday. There are at least 4,000 people who've been fully vaccinated and over 7,100 have received their first dose. The state Dept. of Public Health has logged over 21,000 doses administered in Mendocino County. Adventist says they'll give more doses as soon as they receive them from the state. Yesterday the two approved vaccine manufacturers, Pfizer and Moderna announced they were pumping out millions more for the US. And Johnson & Johnson is poised to get their single dose vaccine approved by the FDA by Friday.

Some timber harvest plans, or logging, planned along the Mendocino Coast has some raising concern about environmental damage. Mendocino Voice reports the Jackson Demonstration State Forest between Willits and Fort Bragg, and south to the Big River watershed near Caspar and Mendocino had been logged hundreds, even thousands of years back, then the state of Calif. bought the land. The redwoods are habitat for various wildlife and if disturbed could potentially endanger, already threatened species of animals and plants. One harvest plan could threaten an area, the news site reports, in the lower Big River watershed and estuary. It comes after harvesting or logging near the main fork of the Noyo River.

State Senator Mike McGuire with his update on his signature legislation, the Great Redwood Trail. McGuire announced during his virtual town hall that the North Coast Railroad Authority board of directors' is planning to railbank. Railbanking is basically a term saying that an old railroad can instead be used for a trail. The Authority has voted to railbank a big chunk between Humboldt and Mendocino counties, which McGuire says is about 50 feet wide and runs 320 miles. He painted a picture for 1,000 attendees of his virtual meetup last week saying it would be a great economic driver for all the rural communities, many of which are struggling. The railbanking is between Willits and Samoa. Ultimately the trail is planned on top of old abandoned railroad tracks.

A planned housing development in Ukiah gets a boost after a Housing Overlay Zone gets a step closer. Last night the Ukiah Planning Commission agreed to look at the Housing Overlay Zone for three parcels on East Gobbi Street. The Daily Journal reports the Community Development Director explains that the zone is a way to streamline future development of affordable housing/mixed use at the site. If the City Council agrees to the new zoning there can be multi-family housing there. The project would have to include at least 20-percent lower income housing and follow the city's design standards. The Planning Commission will dive deeper into the project at their next virtual meeting tonight.

A package of bills is being proposed by State Assemblymember Jim Wood on health care affordability, access, equity, quality and cost containment. Wood says it's the most "comprehensive bill package" he's put together since he was first elected. He says his plan which would include the creation of an "Office of Health Care Affordability" which Wood says is essential to create a sustainable and equitable universal health care model. He says the office would be a partnership with the Governor and his administration who have the same goals as Wood. The package of legislation would also create a comprehensive, statewide Health Information Exchange.

Two Bay Area counties hit the Red Tier in the state's Blueprint to Reopen the Economy, but not its sister county, Sonoma. The Press Democrat reports Sonoma County remains in the Purple Tier, along with Lake and Mendocino counties. So restaurants, wineries and breweries can only have outdoor or takeout service and there are still capacity limits for retailers and indoor entertainment centers and gyms are closed. The state announces changes for counties each Tuesday. Before yesterday, nearly all of the state, 51 of the 58 counties remained in Purple, the most widespread stage. So Sonoma County Health officials say they're pushing for more testing and will set up testing sites at various gathering places, like food banks, churches and in hard hit neighborhoods.

Lake County leaders dealing with the pandemic and the economic fallout thereof, now have to focus on finding a new Public Health officer. Dr. Gary Pace has announced he's leaving mid-April. The Board of Supervisors agreed at their meeting yesterday they should hire a recruitment firm to find Pace's replacement. He was hired in October of 2019 after being the interim officer for a couple of months. He says he's returning to private practice. Lake Co News reports the County Administrative Officer told the board yesterday it could be a challenge to replace Pace as there's been some turnover in the state of Public Health officers. We just had a change in Mendocino County when Dr. Andy Coren was hired to replace Dr. Noemi Doohan who moved out of town. Dr. Pace lives in Sonoma County.

A street in Lakeport has been officially renamed in honor of a local. Westside Community Park is complete and with that Westside Park Road has been renamed "Charlie Jolin Way." Jolin was a force behind making the park a reality. He died last June at the age of 96. He's credited with spending over 2 decades seeing the park to fruition. He was also reportedly instrumental in getting Library Park developed as well. In his past, he'd been a member and chair of the Lakeport Planning Commission, chair of the Citizens Advisory Committee for the development of the city's general plan, a longtime Boy Scout leader and the 2014 recipient of the Stars of Lake County Lifetime Achievement Award.

A new COVID19 relief package has been signed into law, as promised, by the Governor. Yesterday the new group of bills was approved that's supposed to bring relief to individuals, families and businesses due to the financial devastation wrought by the coronavirus pandemic. The legislature passed the package last week to bring direct payments to lower-income individuals, money for small businesses and license renewal fee waivers to businesses affected by the pandemic. The governor says the package will help pay bills, help companies who are the cornerstone of our economy and provide a way to soften the human and economic blows of COVID.

A grant from Cal Fire is helping landowners in Mendocino, Lake, Sonoma, and Napa for fire mitigation projects. Those who apply might be able to get funds to do work like forest thinning, woody fuels reduction, and planting site preparation as part of the North Bay Forest Improvement Program. Cal Fire puts money into the program to help landowners with between 5 and 500 acres for non-commercial fire mitigation efforts. They've put \$1.5 million into the program which will fund a bunch of smaller projects or just a few larger projects. It's run by a nonprofit, the Rebuild NorthBay Foundation.

A new city council member has been sworn in in Fort Bragg. Marcia Rafanan was officially sworn in Monday night. Now for the first time in history the majority on the council is made up of women. Rafanan thanked fellow members, including the mayor for the opportunity. She was voted in as the new member unanimously. She also made history because she's a member of the Sherwood Valley Band of Pomo Indians. She's filling a seat left open after mayor Will Lee stepped down for a job in a different city.

The City of Fort Bragg has put out a statement to remind community members they must remove graffiti on their property. The Graffiti Abatement Program gives property owners fifteen days or they can face possible fines and clean-up costs. They remind too that the goal of the program is to reduce the visual blight caused by graffiti and to prevent or lower the likelihood of it happening again at the same location. The statement goes on to say that studies have shown when graffiti is quickly covered up, it is less likely to continue there. The city says when police officers investigate reported or observed graffiti, both the tenant and property owner at the location will be provided a Notice of Removal and a Graffiti Removal Reimbursement Voucher. They will also follow up to make sure it's gone. They reimburse some costs. Those who cannot remove it should call the

02/25/21

police department. PG&E in legal trouble again as tens of thousands of wildfire victims are suing as part of a trust accusing the utility of old infrastructure igniting fires and company leaders allowing it. The trust of 80,000 victims accusing former executives and board members of dereliction of their duty to be sure their equipment wouldn't cause deaths. The suit was filed in court in San Francisco and part of a \$13.5 billion dollar settlement after the utility filed for bankruptcy two years ago. PG&E allowed in the settlement for victims to come after management separate from the deal. More than 100 people were killed in the fires related to the lawsuit in Northern Calif. in 2017 and 18. And over 25,000 homes and businesses were destroyed.

A man in Ukiah's busted for having drugs in his possession. The Sheriff's office reports arresting Lyle Luke Vincent III after finding him sitting in a car Monday with another man standing outside the car. They observed Vincent leave the area so they followed and contacted him. He allowed for a search of the car and a deputy found \$740.00 cash and a container with a false bottom. In there were six individually packaged containers of suspected heroin, weighing 21.5 grams. The deputy says there was also a couple of containers of meth, weighing in at around 1.5 grams. He was arrested for possessing drugs and transporting for sale. He was being held in jail on \$25,000.00 bail.

A man in Fort Bragg has been arrested for an out of county warrant. Deputies found the guy in Ukiah, the passenger in another person's car. There was a car just parked and the officer did a vehicle check and requested a check on the passenger from dispatch. Elias Rutherford was found to be wanted for warrants and probation in Sonoma County. He was arrested and held on \$300,000.00 bail.

A man in Ukiah's been arrested after a traffic stop. 18 year old Bryan Sanchez was found in the car and had an arrest warrant. The Deputy says they recognized Bryan Sanchez from previous contacts and knew he had an active warrant issued last month. He was arrested without incident and booked on \$150,000.00 bail

A man and woman from Ukiah are arrested on several charges after a traffic stop turns up weapons and ammo. Mendocino Deputies stopped Zachary Lawson and Tara Hill, the passenger, while on routine patrol. Lawson was on active Parole, and Hill was on formal probation so they can be searched. Deputies say they saw two knives on the driver's side floorboard, a live 9mm cartridge on the dashboard and another cartridge on Hill. They say she was also seated near a glass meth pipe. They also apparently had a fake license plate on the car. The two now charged with a slew of crimes including felon in possession of ammunition, felony violation of probation and felon in possession of ammunition. Hill was released on zero bail due to the pandemic, but Lawson was held on \$25,000.

A man from Covelo's could be arrested on weapons charges after an unrelated investigation into fraud. Sheriff's Deputy say they were following up their investigations and tried talking to people in a home when they noticed a semi-automatic rifle with a pistol grip and forward grip with a detachable magazine. The deputy knew the guy living there was a convicted felon and not allowed to have firearms. So they got a search warrant and found a loaded .38 caliber revolver and a loaded .45 caliber semi-automatic handgun. The .45 caliber handgun was later confirmed to be stolen. The semi-automatic was found to have assault weapon capabilities. They found a similar one with bolt action in a trailer at the property. All of the weapons were taken and a report is being sent to the DA's office for possible charges.

A man in Fort Bragg is arrested for trying to run from deputies. The Sheriff's office reports 21 year old Jose Alfredo Huerta of Glenn County was seen in a Honda on North Highway 1 with an expired registration. The deputy found the car was stolen and took chase. The driver Huerta refused to yield and sped up. But when he drove down a cul-de-sac, he was cornered, but he tried leaving anyway and rammed the patrol car. Another deputy came to the scene and the two cornered Huerta in a vacant lot. He ran, but they caught up and detained him. He was then arrested for Felony Reckless Evading and Wrong Way Driving, Possession of a Stolen Vehicle, and Commit Felony while on Pre-Trial Release. He's held without bail.

A woman from Covelo's held by tribal police and turned over to deputies after reportedly ramming another car then chasing it. Mendo Fever reports the woman was detained at the Hidden Oaks Casino. She was arrested at a nearby gas station. The news site reports hearing on a scanner that police were responding to an assault and that someone was being held by tribal police and was in their patrol vehicle. A witness says the woman was in a Subaru Outback and rammed a Toyota 4Runner, then the Subaru caught on fire as the driver continued following the SUV, driving erratically around town.

The Mendocino County Sheriff has put out a statement ahead of upcoming marijuana season. Sheriff Kendall says he spoke this week in front of the Board of Supervisors on grant proposals and about calls this year so far with concerns on climate change, drought, fire safety and drug violence. The Sheriff says policies allowing the black market for marijuana to continue are flawed and says a lack of enforcement and its costs are taking a toll. He also says he's water diversions, water theft, fire suppression water will be at a premium this year and continued violence from drug trafficking must be stopped. He says he's going to move more of his department into the marijuana enforcement team. But he says it comes at a price and they have to find money to support the efforts.

Appointment access codes have reportedly been leaked to people so they can score vaccination appointments. So the state is changing the way they get the vaccine to essential workers and seniors in underserved communities. A spokesman for California Governor's Office of Emergency Services says there had been general access codes given to about 1,000 community groups to sign up residents for reserved doses at federally funded vaccination sites. But the codes were shared elsewhere so those ineligible got their doses and others lost out. The state says however they only think a fraction of the appointments made were using those codes and that most people didn't intentionally misuse them. Some even canceled after seeing news accounts of the mistake.

The Lake County Public Health Officer says the drive thru vaccine idea is working well. Lake Co News reminds us the two sites are at Lakeport Auto Movies and Clearlake's Redbud Park. The news site reports Dr. Gary Pace says not only the county, but multiple community partners, – the two hospitals, Lakeview Health Center, North Lake Pharmacy and Safeway Pharmacy are all administering the vaccine. As of Tuesday there were nearly 11,000 residents vaccinated and 2,600 were fully vaccinated. But the state's new vaccine app has been confusing. MyTurn went live last week but had to be quickly shut down due to its confusion. Some people were allowed to get vaccines, Pace says, who have 2nd homes in Lake County. The same thing reportedly happened in other counties too.

Multiple properties in Clearlake have been added to surplus so they can be sold so affordable housing can be developed instead. The Clearlake City Council made moves last week on 27 properties – 18 owned by the city and nine by the agency that took over for the old Redevelopment Agency. All of the properties together add up to about 26 acres. The addresses and other details on each property is sent to the state, then affordable housing developers can buy the property from the city with the express purpose of putting up affordable housing. There's a bunch of red tape and hoops to jump thru before building can begin. The city reports many affordable housing developments in the works though.

More info on the outbreak at the Mountain View assisted living facility in Ukiah. The Public Health Officer at the Board of Supervisors meeting Tuesday giving an update. Dr. Coren says there were 23 infected residents and eight staff members. 2 residents were hospitalized, earlier this week we found out one died, now as of this week, so did the second one. Dr. Coren went on to say the outbreak happened because a staff member who was positive didn't know right away as tests were being sent out to a Texas lab and there was a major delay. That staffer continued working while infected. They've now apparently changed their testing protocols. Now there's another new outbreak, 6 cases in the California Conservation Corps. The county has now had 3,796 cases and 43 deaths.



Our neighbor to the north Humboldt County has re-entered the Red Tier in the Governor's COVID19 reopening plan. The county was in purple for about a month. The Public Health Officer told their Board of Supervisors the situation had become way more positive and told the board he was expecting to move to Red, it was announced the same day. The health officer explained to the board that case rates had been at or around 7/100,000 residents and their test positivity rate was between 3% to 4%. By now you probably know what getting out of the Purple, widespread tier means, indoor dining with 25% capacity, indoor gyms at 10% capacity, movie theaters with 25% capacity, indoor church and religious services are staying at 25% and indoor retail can go to 50% capacity. Bars are staying closed along with live music and sports.

The State of Calif. is rebounding after a major surge sent the state back to widespread status last year. County health departments statewide reported over 6,200 new cases this week, lowering the state's daily average for a week. The state's at the lowest rate it's been since early November. The last couple of days across the country, though, there have been increases in case numbers again. Still lower than the all time high last month, sitting at about 68,000 cases/day. The highest case rates in Calif are reported in Solano, Sonoma and Contra Costa counties.

Police in Ukiah say they arrested 3 people and are looking for a 4th after an assault on a man in a wheelchair that left him naked and alone near Walmart... Police say they got a call to the store on Airport Park Blvd Tuesday night and found the man without his clothes or wheelchair and with an injury to his leg. They say there was a strong armed robbery against him with two women and two men. Two of the suspects pulled the naked man from his wheelchair and the others lingered by his car. All of them, the victim, and suspects, are believed to be transients. The suspects took the man's wheelchair and left the scene. Not sure what happened to his clothes though. Witnesses and video surveillance identified 3 of the suspects, Charles Hawkins, Sergio Gonzalez and Jennifer Cram and they have been arrested. The other suspect was still on the run. They know the person but were withholding their name as they continue their investigation. The victim was donated clothing and got his wheelchair back.

PG&E continues to deal with legal problems after their bankruptcy filing amidst the wildfires of 2017 and 18 found to be caused by their equipment. In Sonoma County, the District Attorney's Office is demanding the utility company turn over evidence related to the Kincade Fire. The fire burned nearly 78,000 acres and the county is looking at moving a criminal probe forward after 16 months of stagnancy. The company was served a search warrant that forces the utility to turn over documents and other possible information that might be connected to the massive fire in 2019. The DA has only said they're looking to see if the fire started due to PG&E's

02/26/21 negligence or reckless conduct.

A massive land protection package is being introduced in the US Senate that involves land in Humboldt, Trinity and Mendocino counties. Congressman Jared Huffman introduced the bill first to designate almost 258,000 acres of wilderness in Northern California and 480 miles of river to be protected. It also designates nearly 50,000 more acres as possible wilderness. The bills championed by Huffman and 3 other California legislators would protect 535,000 acres as new wilderness and protect hundreds of miles of rivers in the state. 724,000 acres in Trinity and Humboldt counties would also be a restoration area for wildfire mitigation work.

Mendocino Coast Clinics jumping into action jabbing the COVID19 vaccine into arms last week late at night. Apparently they got a call about another 800 doses last Friday after they had just administered over 200 Pfizer vaccines. So last Saturday they got on the horn, calling businesses in approved tiers and community members who were eligible. They had another four vaccine clinics this week with 800 or so doses administered. They are giving the shots to those 65 years and older, emergency medical responders, school and childcare staff, food workers and agricultural workers who are directly involved in growing, harvesting, production, preparing, selling, cooking and serving food products and cannabis and lumber. The medical director for the clinics says since they've been administering the vaccine, they've seen a drop in cases, but they remind to continue wearing masks in public, maintaining physical distancing and washing hands frequently.

A possible drunk driver in Fort Bragg leads to jail because the man was on probation for the same. Police say they got a call last Saturday afternoon to the downtown area seeing a reckless driver, stopping the guy by the Fort Bragg Outlet. They say he seemed drunk so they did field tests on Rodolfo Collichan. He also admitted to police he had a suspended driver's license and that he was drinking before driving. His breath sample showed blood alcohol content at .247% so he was arrested for DUI, driving without a valid driver's license, and violation of probation.

The Center for Biological Diversity has filed a notice to sue the US Fish & Wildlife Service to protect the Clear Lake hitch. Lake Co News reports the action means the Center has given the federal government a 60 day warning before pursuing a lawsuit to list the hitch under the Endangered Species Act. The fish used to be a food source for the Pomo tribe way back when. It wasn't endangered, having been counted in the millions at one time, but now it's estimated there are only a few thousand and only regularly spawn in just a few tributaries. The Center for Biological Diversity had tried already to get the state and federal listings in September 2012. The state approved it as threatened. But the fed, under the Trump administration denied it along with protecting 10 other species.

A former police sergeant in Ukiah has been arrested in connection to a 7 year old armed rape case. Kevin Murray of Lakeport was arrested yesterday on felony charges of rape, forcible oral copulation and being armed in the commission of a felony. The Mendocino County District Attorney's Office, in court papers, says Murray raped a woman between June 1 and July 1 of 2014. They also tacked on a special allegation of being armed with a firearm during the commission of an assault. There was also a second charge against him for forcible oral sex from April 2014. He's held in the Mendocino Jail on \$500,000 bail. He had already been fired after a separate sexual attack case in November at a hotel in Ukiah alleged against him. He's also being sued in a police force case.

Police in Fort Bragg are renewing their call to the public for help finding a missing woman who disappeared in May of 2020. Police say they got a call last May that Barbra Crane had not been in contact with family since May 13th so she was listed then in the Missing and Unidentified Persons System (MUPS). Her last known location was Sleepy Hollow RV park in Willits. As of this week there had still been no sign of her. She was staying with her ex-boyfriend who says she left him with someone in a car with Montana license plates and she left her dogs and a note saying she'd be back. Police say before all of this she was classified as homeless. She's described as being 5'04", 125-135 pounds w/dark black or auburn hair and brown eyes w/multiple tattoos.

A new bill introduced in the state Assembly would give sexual assault victims more time to file a civil lawsuit. East Bay Assemblywoman Buffy Wicks introduced the bill so victims have longer to sue their abusers as a way to seek justice. She says it's a way to create a more "even playing field" and reduce intimidation sexual assault survivors face because their attacker is in the position of power. Wicks had previously introduced similar legislation which became law which extended the statute of limitations for civil actions for people sexually assaulted by a University of California doctor.

At one of Senator Mike McGuire's recent online town halls, he spoke about a path for reopening the important tourism and hospitality sector. McGuire hosted the digital roundtable Wednesday. Hundreds of thousands of the state's hospitality workers have been unemployed for a year. The industry was devastated by the pandemic. McGuire told the meetup he had introduced a bill to put tens of millions into Visit Calif businesses, over 10 billion to businesses and nearly a billion more for state and local taxes.

Point Arena is looking for a poet. You heard that right, the city's interested in finding a local poet to serve as Poet Laureate. This is an honorary position, not a paid position. They say it's to advance the knowledge and enjoyment of literary arts and culture through writing, education and community events. The chosen artist will write poetry for special events and occasions and create events too, like poetry contests, writing workshops and lectures, and public readings. If you'd like to apply, you must send a letter of interest to City Hall or email them. Send your resume, portfolio, noted awards and performances or other info that pertains to the position by April 15, 2021.

To apply for the position, please contact Point Arena City Hall at 451 School Street, call 882-2122, or email [admin@pointarena.ca.gov](mailto:admin@pointarena.ca.gov).

There's a sea animal in trouble along the Mendocino Coast. Mendocino Voice reports it's the Sunflower Sea Star to which is on the Red List of threatened species. That the news site reports, is an international list of species threatened with extinction. The Sunflower Sea Star is listed as critically endangered. That doesn't mean it will get any special protection, but it could bring attention to the sea animals predicament and could help further research into them and conservation through public interest and funding.

Elementary school students are back in the Konocti Unified School District. Last week the kids started to trickle back to in person learning following the hybrid model so there's room for social distancing. Only about 50% of the regular class size is being allowed currently. The students doing at home learning on opposite days are getting the same instruction and real-time interaction according to the Schools Superintendent. The school district bought video cameras, microphones, large screens, and software so they could interact between classrooms throughout the district. Students and staff have to wear masks and do a complete self-evaluation on their cell

03/01/21 phone or Chromebook before being allowed on campus.

That police sergeant in Ukiah who we told you about who's being investigated for rape and assault while on duty is still in jail. The Press Democrat reports Kevin Murray of Lakeport was arrested in January for a November incident involving a woman at a hotel. He's charged with felony sexual battery against her. Court papers say he was working the day of the incident where he's accused of illegally getting into the woman's room at a Super 8 on more than one occasion. He's also accused of felony crimes against another woman in 2014, including rape while carrying a firearm. He's jail and being held on \$500,000 bail and is set for an arraignment today. Separately Murray is being sued for using force against a disabled veteran in 2018.

The newly approved single dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine should start arriving in Calif. within the week. The Gov. announced the state would be receiving over 1.1 million shots in the next three weeks. It was just approved by a CDC panel unanimously this weekend. The vaccine has less handling restrictions than the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines which both require two doses and have to be stored at low temperatures. The federal government has reported that the state of Calif. would be getting about 380,000 Johnson & Johnson vaccines this week, and Gov. Newsom says we should get about that same amount for the next three weeks.

A man in Fort Bragg's been arrested in connection to mail theft. Mendocino County Sheriff's Deputies got a call early Valentine's Day to a possible mail theft, and when they got there, they saw a man walking away. Deputies went up to the man, now identified as Robert Hayes and say he had a bunch of stuff tucked into his jacket. Deputies asked what he had, then found mail on him, that was not his, plus they say he also had some heroin in his possession. Hayes has been arrested and let go, due to the pandemic. But he's charged with mail theft and possession of a controlled substance.

A man in Fort Bragg's been arrested for a couple of active warrants. Police say Cullen Graham did not appear in court, so he was booked into jail. He is charged for various crimes including, felony terrorist threats and battery, failure to appear and disobeying a court order. He's held on \$30,000.00 bail.

New guidance from the state on schools reopening. The Department of Public Health says any county in the Red Tier can reopen the following day. Each Tuesday the state updates which counties can move to the next tier, or if they fall back to a stricter tier. In Ukiah, the superintendent says they expect to get back to in-person learning in 2 weeks. That'll be for grades 7 – 12th depending on local health conditions. The school district is also putting up a new COVID-19 Dashboard. The superintendent says so they can be completely transparent about keeping schools COVID-19 free. If there are cases, there will be contact tracing and reported if it's school or community base, and also if they're not sure. That'll be noted as Undetermined. Schools will also do testing, which is not mandatory. They have 15 min results.

The COVID19 vaccine is being administered to a couple of tiers, and now the Mendocino County Public Health Office has announced logging industry personnel are now included as part of the current Agricultural Workers vaccination tier. They will post on the county's Facebook page when there are vaccine clinics. Apparently, someone accidentally posted "Lodging" personnel as part of the current vaccination group instead of Logging. But the office says if there are lodging staffers directly involved in the preparation of food and/or food services, they too are eligible for vaccinations now. There will be two "First-Dose" clinics this week, today and Wednesday at the Redwood Empire Fairgrounds in Ukiah, you can sign up at the county's vaccine portal or call public health to make an appointment.

A drunk driver caught after reports of a car with several code violations. Police say they got a call Saturday from someone at a gas station who saw a silver Toyota Corolla on S. State Street parked at the fuel pumps with someone inside. So they followed, then stopped the car, finding Eryka Smith, who they say they arrested without incident. They say she was on probation, so she was arrested for possession of a stolen vehicle and violation of probation. She was booked at the MCSO Jail. The stolen car was given back to its rightful owner too.

A man in Ukiah's been arrested for being inside a stolen SUV along with another man. The two seen in a Blue BMW last Thursday. A CHP officer remembered a similar SUV was reported stolen a day before to their Ukiah office> They found the plate matched the reported stolen Beemer. More officers showed up and they stopped the vehicle. Mark Nielsen and Kevin Ford were arrested. It was found the driver, Nielsen was on probation for another car theft and accused of stealing yet another stolen vehicle a week prior. He also had a suspended driver's license. He was also found with meth in his possession. He was arrested for multiple crimes including possession of a stolen vehicle, possession of a controlled substance and driving on a suspended license. Ford also had heroin on him, but he only got a ticket and was released. The SUV owner got his vehicle back.

A man in Covelo's been arrested for having a gun while driving. Mendocino County Sheriff's Deputies conducted a traffic stop last Thursday, finding Juan Flores with a loaded .45 caliber pistol under the front passenger seat which was reported to have been stolen from Berkeley. He's arrested for carrying a loaded firearm in public and possession of stolen property. Since we're in the midst of a pandemic, he was released without bail.

A staff member in the Upper Lake Unified School District has tested positive for COVID-19. The superintendent reported yesterday it was the first case in an employee since they restarted in person learning in August. Lake Co News reports the Superintendent says the staff member does not work directly with students. Last Thursday they felt unwell, were sent home and got tested. Test results came back yesterday of a positive test. They say they'll work with the public health office, do contact tracing and test anyone who had been in contact with the staff member. Upper Lake and the Lucerne Elementary School District both went to "hybrid" learning. Upper Lake took a couple weeks off over the holidays because of surging cases and came back January 25th.

A tax default property sale is being considered by the Lake County Board of Supervisors. Lake Co News reports the board will take up the matter tomorrow and will also look at starting an ad hoc committee to promote tolerance, respect, equity and inclusion. It's an online only meeting due to the pandemic. The summertime tax sale is proposed for over 470 properties. Regarding the ad hoc committee, the board chair Bruno Sabatier said after they adopted a proclamation promoting tolerance, respect, equity and inclusion in Lake County, an important next step would be to have the committee that could plan a community visioning forum where they would come up with ideas and actions to "build bridges where there may be walls" with tolerance, respect, understanding, equity and inclusion. He says there should be seven seats including 2 board members, one representative of law enforcement and four members of the community.

It's a bust. The planned sale of the old Austin Resort is not happening after all. The city of Clearlake had a deal in hand to sell the old resort property for more than \$915,000 to a development company, but apparently the economic fallout from the pandemic has stopped the deal in its tracks. Last May the city council approved the sale, but now the city manager says the development company is hesitant to move forward due to the economic climate. City Manager Alan Flora says the city's confident they'll find another partner. He says there are a bunch of other development projects they're working on that unless someone else comes forward with a good plan for the old resort, they'll focus their energy elsewhere.

Some concern reported about OptumServe getting more involved in the state's pandemic response, even working to get the vaccine out to communities, even though there have been complaints about mediocre service. The Governor announced last week that 11 OptumServe vaccination sites were opening in some of the "hardest-hit or most at-risk communities" in the Central Valley. At the same time officials in Lassen County said they'd no longer work with the company saying their testing sites were run poorly and staffed by people who themselves were publicly "coughing violently" and not wearing protective gear. Rumor has it OptumServe's parent company is a major Newsom donor, but we have not independently verified that info. Just the same there are now "pilot vaccination programs" including OptumServe clinics in Sonoma, San Bernardino, Riverside and Contra Costa counties.

Looks like the state is in good financial shape even though some 1.6 million Californians have lost their jobs due to the pandemic. The Governor announced in January the state had collected \$10.5 billion more in taxes than expected. And at the end of the fiscal year on July 1st there was a reported \$19 billion surplus. Since the state is doing that well, it means, for only the second time ever, a state law kicks in that says Californians get a refund due to the surplus. Even though the pandemic meant the closure of scores of businesses and entertainment and sporting events, the state's revenue swelled. It's one of few state's where the wealthiest pay the most taxes. The state is projecting Californians will get \$185 billion from capital gains, which is the most in history. That turns into an \$18.5 billion profit off taxes.

It looks good for a logging plan on over 200 acres of steep land above the Russian River, outside Guerneville and Monte Rio even though many are opposed. The plan is supposed to be getting approval in just days, but residents and activists worry it's close to neighborhoods, its effect on wildlife habitat, wildfire risks and aesthetics. The Roger Burch family owns the property and the Redwood Empire Sawmill in Cloverdale. They say the forest needs to be thinned to promote growth of bigger trees and reduce wildfire fuel. The land is across from a park, less than a mile from Guerneville, near Northwood Golf Club at the edge of Monte Rio. It's zoned for timber production.

03/02/21

The Lake County Public Health Office reports getting a couple thousand doses of the COVID19 vaccine. Starting yesterday they put out the word again who is eligible for the vaccine, that is those over 65, long-term care residents, healthcare workers, emergency services workers, food and ag. workers and education and childcare workers. You can check the state's public health website for more information. Dr. Gary Pace, the Public Health Officer says starting March 15th, the vaccines will open up to those with certain health conditions, severe disabilities and need a note from their doctor.

There's a reopening plan in Willits for schools. The school board had a special online meeting last week with nearly 90 residents there too. The board decided the first phase will be students at Brookside Elementary and Blosser Elementary coming back for in person learning from 8 a.m. to noon and then they'll go home with a school lunch. They have the option to remain in online learning too. As with schools across the district, masks are required for students, staff and teachers and there will be six feet distance between students. The school superintendent says they're still working on a deal with the teacher's union. The county needs to get to the Red Tier before older students can get back to class. Right now they'll have 15 students/teacher.

The COVID19 outbreak at Mountain View assisted living in Ukiah did not contain any of the variant strains. A spokesperson for the facilities said there was no evidence of variants, or an abnormally high spread of the virus, or recurrent cases. Last we heard there had been 33 cases at the facility and they were working with the Public Health Dept. The facility also reported the public health office didn't request variant testing, or offer any guidance related to variant testing requirements. Dr. Andy Coren had said the infection spread easily so he was concerned there might be a variant strain running through the place and said he did contact the state about possibly sending samples. But the health dept. says the facility used a private lab and the county recently changed labs so there were no variant tests requested.

Stand by for higher prices from PG&E. The utility company says they're raising the rate for electricity and natural gas to fund upgrades to improve safety and reliability. The increase for an average customer is up nearly \$9 more a month after another increase at the beginning of the year. A representative of the giant utility company says they understand it could be a hardship for many. Last year the state Public Utilities Commission approved the rate hikes. But some reports say the increases for electric and gas were way above the overall inflation rate for the Bay Area. In any case the company says the rate increases will help them manage vegetation, expand their network of weather stations and high-definition cameras to monitor for fire danger, improve its public safety power shutoff program, improve gas systems like leakage, repairs, engineering and preventative maintenance.

A special meeting's being held by the Lakeport Unified School District Governing Board on ways to fill a budget hole and save money in the future. Only board members are allowed in person due to the pandemic, but community members who want to join, can, over zoom. The meeting tonight is spending a good amount of time on a deficit recovery plan. The chief business official wrote in the notes that the declining enrollment and more pension contributions mean the District cannot meet its financial commitments over the next three years. And per requirements from the Lake County Office of Education, districts have to have a deficit recovery plan if they're in "qualified status", meaning they're struggling financially. The District trying to make up \$300,000.

A man from Upper Lake accused of killing his stepmom has been ordered to stand trial. A judge ruled there is enough evidence to try 35 year old Matthew Mora for the shooting death in January of Christine Mora, who he shared a home with. Matthew also faces charges of assault with a semiautomatic weapon on his dad William, who police say he pointed a gun at; and for negligent discharge of a firearm firing a round from his handgun while he walked on Highway 20 before the confrontation. Police found the woman's body after reports of a gunshot victim. Matthew's dad told police his son shot his wife. Matthew was arrested after being found at a Motel in Upper Lake. Matthew is in jail on \$2,150,000 bail.

The state of California is spending several million to help those seeking asylum from Mexico. The idea as President Biden looks to unravel some of his predecessor's work on immigration, making those seeking asylum wait in Mexico until their court dates. The money will last thru June and pay for things like hotel rooms for immigrants to quarantine during the pandemic before they land at their final destinations across the country. There will also be money give to the Jewish Family Service of San Diego for food and transportation. The state will also pay for health services for shorter stays, including COVID-19 testing. There about 26,000 people with active cases who are going to be allowed in the country. And about 25 people released a day in San Diego.

The state has officially turned over its COVID-19 vaccination system to Blue Shield. The health insurance company is like a third party administrator. The Governor announced Blue Shield would take the lead on vaccinations in January. The company says they're hoping to get more people vaccinated and they're expecting from 1 million doses a week, where we are now, to 4 million doses/week by the end of March. Yesterday the Governor said there had already been over 9 million doses administered and the positivity rate was down over 2 points from a week ago. Blue Shield was expecting to fully take over the state's vaccination system by the end this month.

Not a lot of rain in February means we could be headed into another severe drought. The state's monthly snowpack survey shows about 60% of average snowpack for this point in the year and we're nearly at the end of the stormy season. Forecasters are not expecting a lot more snow. Water users in some parts of the state are already being asked to cut back. Some water agencies are asking customers to reconsider long showers and outdoor watering. And growers in the Central Valley are already challenged and have to figure out which crops should be the top priority. Forecasters say we still could see some rain this month and next, but the really wet season has come to an end and we may be in one of the state's driest years ever if we don't get any more rainy weather.



The Mendocino County Public Health Office reports more people will become eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine. The county continues to inoculate tiers 1A and 1B, now it'll open up to folks ages 16 to 64 with certain health conditions, including Chronic Kidney Disease (stage 4 or over), Chronic Lung Disease (oxygen dependent), Cancer, Heart disease, Immunocompromised State (from chemotherapy, or other medical conditions), Diabetes, Severe Obesity, Sickle Cell Disease, Pregnancy and Chronic Disabilities (both physical or mental). So those who fit into those groups can begin signing up for vaccinations with a doctor's note. You have to prove you're eligible before you can get your vaccine. <https://myturn.ca.gov> To view all upcoming county-hosted COVID-19 vaccination events and their eligibility requirements, please visit: <https://www.mendocinocounty.org/community/novelcoronavirus/covid-19-vaccinations/vaccination-clinics>

03/03/21 The interim Willits Police Chief is speaking out about the former chief and her would-be lawsuit against the city. Chief Fabian Lizarraga says there's been rumors circulating and stories being told in the local paper about the police dept. and staff. The chief says there's no lawsuit that's been filed against the city or the police dept. and he's not going to speak about specifics on the whole thing. But he says since he's been in the department for about 4 months and in his 43 years of law enforcement experience, including at the command level in Los Angeles, and working in Fort Bragg, he sees only dedicated members. He says there's a lack of resources, but everything is professional, with integrity and compassion.

As the state reports counties moving in and out of different colored tiers, Lake, Mendocino and other surrounding counties stay in the Purple tier. Napa, Santa Clara and San Francisco are moving to Red. Glenn and Colusa counties are also in the Purple. The mayor of San Francisco says it's a time to return to tourism and a great time to stay in the city and not travel outside the city. There are also lower rents in the bigger cities. Also El Dorado, Lassen, Modoc and San Luis Obispo counties have all also been approved to move to the Red tier. And the Gov. wants schools to get back to in person learning, and he's been urging schools to use funding set aside for reopening after a deal with lawmakers.

As promised the Lake County Board of Supervisors has approved the sale of about 500 tax defaulted properties. At their meeting yesterday, the board approved a list of properties to be sold in June. The Treasurer-Tax Collector presented 490 properties to be sold. If they're all sold at their minimum, it could bring in nearly \$3,000,000. Owners who have fallen behind paying their taxes have some time to pay off their tax bill before that to get their properties back. The properties are put online at Bid4Assets, but not until 30 days before the auction. The Treasurer told the board she expected to have as many as 1,000 properties for sale each year. She expects a total of 500/year to sale based on past sales returns.

The Lakeport Unified School District Board has approved a plan to plug a budget deficit. At a special meeting last night the board discussed the deficit and its potential effect on the district's financial obligations. The district has to certify to the county office of education that it can meet its financial obligations for the rest of this fiscal year and for the next two years also. Lake Co News reports the Lakeport Superintendent and the Superintendent of schools in the county had been sending letters back and forth about a \$668,000 deficit. The school district is also trying to add a couple of teachers and a high school counselor. The plan moving forward includes some cuts instead.

Mendocino County is dipping its toes back into the cannabis czar employment pool again. There have been three of them who have not worked out, and now the county is trying again to get someone to take on the cannabis permit program manager position, which they used to call the "cannabis czar." The last person in the position stayed on the longest, about a year. The position is part of the planning and building department now so whoever gets the gig will report to county supervisors, not the CEO. The job requires a college grad, or equivalent experience and pays between \$84,000 to nearly \$102,000/year. The deadline to apply is Thursday, March 11th.

A proposed roundabout on the to-do list for the Ukiah City Council. The council to take up the proposal at their meeting today, but apparently there's not enough money for the way this one is designed. It's located at Low Gap Road and North Bush Street. On the report to the council, staff have put down the idea of mini-roundabouts which use more paint, but less concrete and are therefore less expensive. And apparently there's grant money available that could cover the cost. But the California Transportation Commission has to okay the project, which is pretty standard, so the application has to be revised.

The city of Mendocino is entering a drought... potentially. Stage 2 anyway, according to the Mendocino City Community Services District. The board confirmed a Stage 2 drought designation at their meeting which will be reviewed again at the end of the month as they look at the water supply. Stage 2 drought essentially means, residents agree to a 15 percent voluntary reduction in water usage, there are designated irrigation times, no car washing, except with a hand-held bucket or hose that has a positive shutoff nozzle, no refilling decorative fountains or ponds unless its recycled water and the same for hot tubs or swimming pools. Also water served at restaurants is upon request only.

The city of Clearlake's new vision for downtown is about to come to fruition. The City Council is set to approve the strategic vision and move to authorize the City Manager to sign a contract with a consultant. There will also be a public hearing for the projects that will be part of the program. The staff report going back a couple of years now was with Retail Strategies which was put on hold, as we reported last week, due to the pandemic. The city's looking to bring in new businesses to the Highway 53 corridor and retain some of the businesses already in the downtown core. The Record Bee reports city staff is working in an unconventional manner to attract business downtown where there's a lack of strong infrastructure, especially for pedestrians or various transportation amenities, and many buildings that need more investment.

A deal has been reached between the Gov. and lawmakers to get schools back to in person learning with billions in incentives. The Gov. Gavin Newsom and legislative leaders announced an agreement Monday after two months of working on logistics to get kids back to campuses statewide after almost a year of closures due to the pandemic. Growing evidence has shown minimal outbreaks of significance related to coronavirus in schools. Gov. Newsom said at a news conference schools will get the resources they need to open back up. But some parents had complained the agreement doesn't mean schools will totally reopen and that it allows for part online and part in person, or hybrid learning and only allows elementary kids back at first. The parent group, Open-SchoolsCA says older students will be left behind and various schools will stay closed for months until they're forced by the Governor, legislature or the courts.

A member of the state Assembly has introduced a bill to force the reopening of theme parks. Assemblymember Sharon Quirk-Silva of Orange County, the Chair of the Arts, Entertainment, Sports, Tourism, and Internet Media Committee introduced the Safe Theme Park Reopening Act last month. She says both large and small theme parks should be included in the industry guidance tier structure. She's urging the Governor to adjust his guidance on the industry, saying it's time to get theme park employees back to work. Her bill moves next to the Assembly Arts, Entertainment, Sports, Tourism and Internet Media Committee.

03/04/21 [The old Best Western hotel on South Orchard Street in Ukiah is turning into a](#)

A couple of kids from Round Valley had to be airlifted to Redding after an accident with two all-terrain vehicles. Mendo Fever reports the CHP responded to the incident. The 12 and 14 year old girl's were taken to the Covelo Fire Station on Highway 162. The 12-year-old had an arm injury and the 14-year-old suffered a head injury after the crash which happened near Briggs Point on the road.

A woman arrested for stealing a car has been arrested for the same thing again... The Ukiah Police Dept. reports getting a report of a stolen car and contacting the victim who led officers to where he left the car running in front of a business where he went inside for a brief transaction. The victim said they thought they locked their car, but when they came back out their car was gone. A BOLO was put out for the stolen car and the car was later tracked traveling eastbound on Highway 29, toward Kelseyville. A police officer tried stopping the car, but the driver sped away, so they tossed a spike strip down. The car hit a guardrail and rolled and Eryka Smith was found inside. She had to be taken to a hospital but was arrested for several crimes. She also had been arrested within three days for stealing another car.

A staff member of the California Republican Party is suing the party for racial discrimination and retaliation for reporting it. Botisha McKnight, who is Black, filed suit against two former employees and the party alleging a superior constantly made discriminatory remarks against Black people and even acknowledged her comments were racist. The suit also says the party's former executive director and a relative of the other woman being sued, retaliated against McKnight and gave her difficult work outside of her job description after she filed a complaint. The two accused stopped their work for the party last year but McKnight is still there. A spokesman for the party says they immediately investigated when they heard and took action.

Congressman Mike Thompson has introduced legislation as the chair of the House Gun Violence Prevention Task Force on background checks. The bipartisan bill is co-sponsored by 3 other Democrats and 3 Republicans to require background checks on every firearm sale. It had been introduced two years ago and passed the house, but never got past then-Senate Leader Mitch McConnell's desk. Thompson says the Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2021 will help keep guns out of the hands of those who may be a danger to themselves or others. A companion bill has been introduced in the Senate by Senator Chris Murphy of CT. The Gun Violence Prevention Task Force first came to be after the Sandy Hook tragedy in Murphy's home state. There are now over 185 members.

A new report says Native Americans who die from COVID-19 may not be completely represented. Leaders also say they fear the state may be undercounting the amount of deaths from the virus in their communities. The state of California is home to the most American Indians and Alaska Natives in the United States, and the most American Indians and Alaska Natives living in urban centers who say they're often mis-declared as White, Latino or Black by uninformed healthcare workers. So far the state has tracked almost 9,000 American Indians infected with coronavirus and 163 have died. But the community leaders say it doesn't reflect the real numbers. And the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has shown American Indians and Alaska Natives are the single group hardest-hit by the pandemic.

The company Hunter Communications is reportedly putting in a bunch of fiber-optic lines in southern Oregon and northern California for high speed internet. Hunter has won over \$19 million from the FCC, the Federal Communication Commission's Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) Phase I auction. They're installing the lines for nearly 6,000 underserved homes and businesses in the region. The money for several communities in Oregon and in Eureka, Hoopa and Willow Creek, CA. The company's headquarters are in Oregon.

The Housing Overlay Zone which would make way for some housing projects in Ukiah has been approved... the first step anyway. The Planning Commission approved the "Housing Overlay Zone" for three parcels on East Gobbi Street which means builders would only need a building permit, the first time the city has done this. The developer would therefore just need to follow city design and development standards. The three parcels, near the Rail Trail, are owned by the city. Then if they're developed, a developer would pay into the city's Housing Trust Fund. There's now a special meeting planned for the city council Monday for a proposed development on the parcels.

Lake County is staying in the Purple Tier this week, but the county's public health office says it's getting closer to the Red Tier. The office told the Board of Supervisors this week that the state's cases are going down too. The county is getting about 2,000 COVID19 vaccines/week and that should bump up with the recent approval of the single dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine. Dr. Gary Pace says they have to fight harder to get access due to being a smaller county. He told the board Blue Shield of Calif. is taking over the vaccine distribution, which also includes setting appointments, data and tier designations so he's not sure how the county will transition with the health insurance provider. In other action at the board meeting, they agreed to start the ad hoc committee to promote "tolerance, respect, equity and inclusion" with two board supervisors, a law enforcement representative, two city representatives, two tribal representatives and four public representatives.

A man accused of molesting a child in Lake County is asking for his trial to be moved to Alameda County. David Johnson appeared online for a hearing connected to the case. The request to move the trial was sent to the Lake County Probation Department and is now set for a re-setting of Jury Trial. He is not currently in custody and was released on his own recognizance but is on Supervised Conditional Release. He was first arrested for oral copulation (with a victim under 10 years old), harmful material sent to minor, lewd acts (with victim under 14 years), annoy/ molest child under 18 years and indecent exposure after a January 2019 investigation into reports of the sex assault.

The City of Lakeport is starting to work with a consulting firm to help secure a grant for disaster relief. At the city council meeting earlier this week, the Professional Service Agreement was approved for Mintier Harnish to come up with design and development standards for the city's zoning ordinance and updates to its accessory dwelling unit rules. A three person committee picked the Sacramento firm. The city won \$65,000 from the Local Early Action Planning Grants ("LEAP") so about \$12,000 of that is being used for a permitting process. The rest and money from another grant will go to the proposed project with money to spare. The city's also reportedly eligible for \$2.4 million from a Multi-Family Housing Program from the state department of Housing and Community Development (HCD).

Youth sports can return to Calif. An organization called "Let Them Play CA" had been lobbying the state, recruiting over 700 coaches and tens of thousands of students to advocate to restart youth sports. The group, out of San Diego, put out a statement yesterday saying, "when something matters, no matter the odds, no matter if you win or lose, you try". Full guidelines were supposed to be posted yesterday including testing protocols, how many guests are allowed at games, and exactly which sports can be played. They did note the state would provide testing for men's football, water polo and rugby teams, but all other sports would have to do their own testing because a once a week testing requirement is part of the deal.

03/05/21

A sheriff's deputy in Humboldt County appears to be in trouble with the law himself. The Sheriff's Office reports a correctional deputy was connected to some drug smuggling into the jail for inmates. After a month long investigation, federal agents found Ricardo Tranquilino Aguirre of Eureka had brought drugs into the facility over several months. He was acting alone. The Sheriff's office put out a statement that his "criminal and disgraceful conduct is the antithesis of the professional standards, ethics and organizational values of the Sheriff's Office". He's charged with several crimes including possession of a controlled substance while armed, smuggling contraband into a jail and transportation/sale of a controlled substance.

Sonoma County looks ahead to entering the Red Tier. The Press Democrat reports the state announced changes to the Blueprint to Reopen the Economy which could put Sonoma in the Red by the end of the month. The county has been in the widespread purple tier, along with Mendocino and Lake counties. The state's public health dept. announced after 2 million shots are administered to the most disadvantaged regions of Calif. then restrictions on businesses can loosen. Across the state so far, 1.6 million in disadvantaged regions have been vaccinated and the state expected to hit the 2-million-mark within the next couple of weeks. Restaurants can then start to reopen with indoor dining with 25% capacity, gyms at 10%, and grocery stores could expand to full customer capacity from the current 50%.

The Governor and state lawmakers have finalized their \$6.6 billion plan to get schools back to in person learning by the end of the school year. It's not mandatory for a school to reopen or for kids to attend in person. But there's money attached to reopen safely. School districts have almost until the end of the academic year to figure it out too, May 15th. Then districts can get back to having kids on campus, but if they open after that date, no money comes to them. For the last year most of the state's over 6 million students have been doing distance learning. Some school boards though say they're at loggerheads with teachers unions over safety protocols and there are also parents who don't want their kids back in person.

In Fort Bragg patrols are starting around school campuses. Police are getting back to the regular school patrol routines, so if you see more police around neighborhoods, you'll know why. Officers will be out conducting traffic enforcement at drop-off and pick-up times. A reminder around school campuses, the speed limit is only 15 miles/hour when children are present. The police department is also putting traffic enforcement teams with a Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) device by the schools for increased traffic enforcement capabilities.

Changes are being put in place for the Blueprint to reopen the Economy in Calif. On Wednesday, the Governor announced the color tiered reopening system will now include getting 2 million residents in lower income communities vaccinated. And with that comes 400 of the state's zip codes getting 40% of California's COVID-19 vaccine doses. Most of the communities are in Los Angeles County, the Inland Empire and the Central Valley. After that 2 million of about 8 million eligible residents are vaccinated, the state will revise the virus case rate needed for a county to enter the Red Tier from Purple. So instead of 7 cases per 100,000, it'll be 10 per 100,000 so more restaurants, gyms, museums, movie theaters and other businesses can reopen indoors with capacity limits.

Unemployment down this week. Initial claims, or first time applications were way under 100,000 for a second week in a row. The U.S. Labor Department report showed still that 745,000 people in the US lost their jobs. But in Calif. it's the first time in about a year that there were 2 straight weeks of lower than 100,000 in weekly claims. Since the pandemic first triggered economic shutdowns, Calif. has had mostly 100,000 or more jobless claims/week. 45 out of 48 weeks at least. The last week of data, that ended Feb. 27th, there were about 88,130 initial claims for unemployment, down from 90,470 claims filed a week before.

The new Johnson & Johnson, one dose vaccine is headed to Mendocino County. The Emergency Management Coordinator in Ukiah says we should be getting it this week, but then we won't get more for a few more weeks. The vaccine is easier to handle than the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines which require cold temperature storage and two doses. The Johnson & Johnson is neither. The county is reportedly working out the distribution channel. So far about 26% of Mendocino County residents have received a first dose of the two dose regimen and 12 percent have had both. Today at the Ukiah Valley Conference Center 600 doses of the Pfizer vaccine will be administered.

A man accused of murder and declared to be incompetent to stand trial will get a conservatorship. Steven Michael Fredericks is accused of killing his dad and trying to kill his mother. He was present at a court proceeding by video conference this week. It's been deemed by a doctor that he cannot care for himself or manage his finances so he needs to have a conservator. He also can't be tried in the case until he's found to be competent. Another court date was set for the end of the month. The case against him will not be continuing until doctor finds he can understand the proceedings against him. He's been charged with murder, attempted murder, causing injury to an elder and assault with a deadly weapon for the March 2018 incident at a home near the Nice-Lucerne cutoff exit from Hwy 29.

Hope Rising will be taking part in research to improve social services, public health, and health care. Aligning Systems for Health is running the study to be in alignment with Accountable Communities for Health for four months looking at health equity in Lake County. The study across Calif. and Washington to find ways for fair and just health for all. Hope Rising is one of three Accountable Communities of Health in the state out of 13 who were chosen for the study. For the study Hope Rising will ask stakeholders and community members to be involved in the deep dive study, then share the results next week.

It could be a problem opening schools if enough school nurses don't agree to come back to work in person. The nurses are obviously needed to help keep, not only students, but also school staff safe while we're in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. Apparently there are several schools in the state without a nurse, a district will just split their time between several schools instead. So that's already a hurdle for health, and now there are so many safety requirements to reopen campuses, including screening staff and students for symptoms, testing and contact tracing. The president of the California School Nurses Organization says nurses should be involved in reopening discussions, but in a lot of the state's districts, that's not the case.

The Graton Resort & Casino is giving raises to their staff across the board. Starting Monday, the higher pay kicks in. It's a minimum of a 10% raise for workers at the Rohnert Park casino for salaried employees, and hourly wage increases for tipped and non-tipped workers up to \$3.25 more/hour. The casino is also reportedly launching a new quarterly discretionary bonus program too. The Tribal Chair says families in Northern California "struggle to get by on the minimum wage" and a wage increase seemed fitting after the last year. In June the casino allowed nearly all of its 2,000 employees to come back after furloughing 1,200 in March.

More and more activities are reopening in the state, now Major League Baseball games are opening to the public along with other outdoor sporting events. And Disneyland and some live concerts too. The state's public health officer, Dr. Mark Ghaly says coronavirus cases and hospitalizations are going down and the number of people getting vaccinated is going up. So with the news for April 1st, theme parks can reopen when a county is in the red tier with 15% capacity, but it's only for residents of California to attend. And attendance increases to 25% in the orange tier and 35% in the yellow tier. Outdoor sports events can only have 100 people in the purple tier but each tier allows for more attendees. All of the new guidelines are

03/08/21 only for outdoor activities, any indoor events are still banned.

2 men from Calif. have been arrested as they hit Nebraska. The two from Redwood Valley, Javier Hernandez-Romano and Gustavo Perez-Heuerta, were found with 770 pounds of pot during a traffic stop Wednesday near Seward. The trooper who pulled them over apparently saw their cargo van speeding and not putting on its turn signal on Interstate 80. When the trooper stopped the two, they smelled weed coming from inside the van and searched the van. The two were arrested for possession of marijuana with intent to deliver.

The Lake County Public Health Officer says the test positivity rate is down at under 5%. Dr. Gary Pace says also the rate across the state is dropping even though over 50,000 Californians have died in the last year due to the virus. The county is still in the Purple Tier with a rate of 11/100,000. There are only 18 counties in the state out of the Purple, but Dr. Pace says Lake is getting closer. When the state hits 2 million vaccine doses in the hardest hit regions, it means the Red Tier will be 10/100,000 so Lake will be there. And once it's at 4 million doses for the same communities, a Case Rate of 6/100,000 will mean the Orange Tier. In Lake so far, 9,600 first doses of the vaccine have been administered, and 4,800 people have received a second dose. To see if you're eligible you can visit the state's public health website. The county is expecting to get 3,000 more first and second doses along with the newer single dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine. In Mendocino County there's a vaccine event at the Fairgrounds in Ukiah starting at 9am. Those in Tiers 1A and 1B are eligible.

After reports to the Sheriff's office of a suspicious vehicle, deputies found an old police vehicle parked. Deputies say the car was black and had spotlights, at the intersection of Rancho Grande Drive and Cabana Court in Ukiah, CA, and when they approached, they found Shannon Henson. They searched the car after Henson agreed and found he was on probation too. There they found 3 pipes commonly used for meth, switchblade knife and about 8 grams of suspected methamphetamine so he was arrested. The charges against Henson include being a drug user while being in possession of a firearm and possessing a switchblade in a vehicle. Henson is held on \$25,000 bail.

A woman from Ukiah's been arrested for violating parole. Deputies say Amber Ricetti, who was on summary probation, was found last Thursday so they searched her car. She's wanted in connection to a fraud investigation too. Cops say she wouldn't give them the keys to her car and tried to get away. So she ended up getting arrested for delaying and obstructing a Sheriff's Detective and violating the terms of her probation. She was booked but freed due to the pandemic.

The Board of Supervisors in Lake County take up an ordinance to try to prevent destructive mussels from infesting Clear Lake. The board's also set to extend the old juvenile hall to continue as a temporary support shelter for the homeless. The mussel discussion later in the meeting. On the agenda it notes how Clear Lake was recently voted the best bass fishing lake in the country and is routinely noted as one of the top five best bass fishing lakes across the country too. So they'll look to further protect the lake from the invasive species. And in an untimed item, the board's looking at the request to continue the former juvenile hall facility as a temporary homeless shelter through June 30th.



There's been another death in the county from Covid-19. Now 44 people have died from the coronavirus in Mendocino County. The Public Health Office says the latest death was a 93 year old Ukiah woman. There are two people in the hospital out of the county and another in a nursing home out of the county. The Public Health Officer, Dr. Andy Coren says there are no new outbreaks to report at the moment. And during his regular Friday announcements on the virus, Dr. Coren said they'd start doing testing for different strains. The daily case rate is about 2.7 percent with an average of about 3 cases/day. The county's given over 31,000 vaccines. About 13.5% of the county has received both doses.

A family with a couple of pet goats in Ukiah gets to keep them. The Ukiah City Council has given the family the go ahead to keep the goats after their neighbor appealed to have them removed from the home on North Oak Street. The meeting on the matter Wednesday featured the Vice Mayor saying he met the owner of the animals and asked her how she cares for the goats and cleans up after them. He said he looked at their shelter and pen and didn't see any hazards or nuisances. The city attorney made sure all knew that they needed to hear from both sides, the family with the goats and the neighbor who complained, Ruth Van Antwerp, who just wanted the animals not to be visible to her dogs and wanted to make sure the neighbor's dog had adequate shelter.

After Lake County completed its yearly Point in Time survey, they showed 241 people who were either homeless or living without shelter. Over 300 surveys were turned in for the 2021 count which couldn't be done in person this year due to the pandemic. Last year they counted more than twice as many, with 572 per the Continuum of Care. There could be some glitches due to the online surveys. 600 were attempted but only 319 were turned in. Continuum of Care is supposed to help the county one day end homelessness. They had over 60 volunteers on the count, looking at participating sites including: Clearlake, Lower Lake (United Methodist Church), Middletown (United Methodist Church), Kelseyville (Senior Center), Lakeport (The Harbor on Main), and Upper Lake.

A man has been arrested after reports of a knife wielding robber at the Motel 6 south in Ukiah. Police say they were called to the motel after a staff member said someone entered the lobby and demanded money while holding a knife. Officers saw the man, Marcus Anthony Meloy standing in the lobby with what looked like a knife in his hand so they drew their weapons from outside a window and he threw the knife to the ground. When he came out of the lobby they grabbed the guy and arrested him. He was found with scissors in his hand and admitted he was trying to rob the motel clerk who said she got away and hid in a backroom and called police. He's charged with attempted robbery and violation of felony probation and was being held on \$75,000.00 bail.

The man accused of allowing the overcrowding of an Oakland Warehouse that caught on fire looks to be getting house arrest. 36 people died in the 2017 Ghost Ship Fire. Derick Almerna, the master tenant of the warehouse was on house arrest due to the pandemic. Now the judge in his ongoing case sentenced him to 12 years in prison, but he probably won't be in jail. He's already served some time. And his last trial ended in a hung jury. The judge apologized to families saying she knew they wouldn't find it acceptable. And families had urged for the judge to say no to the plea deal after Almerna pleaded guilty to 36 counts of involuntary manslaughter in

03/09/21 exchange for that 12-year sentence.

A plan for thousands of new oil and gas wells in the next 15 years in Kern County has passed that Board of Supervisors. Environmentalists and others had been calling for the board to say no. But the board said it could mean thousands of jobs. Last night they approved the deal supported by the petroleum industry. The new ordinance creates a blanket environmental impact report so as many as 2,700 new wells a year get approved in the oil rich area of the state. They had to revise the ordinance from 2015 because an appeals court ruled that violated the California Environmental Quality Act, and there were no new drilling permits allowed until now.

[If you volunteer at a vaccination site, you might get to get yourself a shot, or t](#)

Police in Fort Bragg have arrested a woman for DUI after she rams her car into a power pole. Police got a call Sunday night to a gray colored Ford Fusion, potentially on fire. On their way they heard the driver was trying to leave the scene. They found the woman, and inside the car, an open container of alcohol. Police say Rhonjene Ammerman appeared drunk and when they ran a check on her driver's license they found it was suspended for a prior DUI. So they did a field sobriety test and then arrested her for DUI and driving while having a suspended license. She was booked into jail.

A man from Rohnert Park driving on Highway 20 has been in a car accident, with the pickup he was driving going off the road and abutting up to a home near Clearlake Oaks. Lake Co News reports 51 year old Everette Reep was in the crash in his 2020 Ford F350 pickup Saturday night. The CHP reports Reep was headed east on the Highway, west of Garden Court, at an unknown speed when for some reason he went off the road. The truck rolled and partially ejected the man. The truck ended up on its side on the driver's side against a home and pinned him inside. He had to be extricated by the Northshore Fire Department. The CHP reports he had major injuries and was flown to a Cal Fire station in Clearlake Oaks then to Santa Rosa Memorial in an air ambulance. They say he did not have on a seatbelt at the time of the crash and they do not suspect drugs or alcohol as factors in the accident.

Another online town hall this week with Congressman Mike Thompson. The meeting Thursday night at 7pm on Zoom and the Congressman's Facebook page is the third since the new congress was seated. Thompson will talk about the latest stimulus package which is bringing more unemployment insurance and direct payments to some for \$1,400. As you probably know Thompson represents the Fifth District in the state, including all or part of Contra Costa, Lake, Napa, Solano and Sonoma counties.

Calif is gaining on getting as many teachers who want to get the vaccine, vaccinated. In the last week the state has reportedly tripled its goal with over 200,000 teachers, school staff and childcare workers getting their shots. That's way above what the state wanted, to administer 75,000 vaccines/week. 10% of the supply is going to school staff. The Gov. said it's welcome news for "teachers, students and parents as more and more schools reopen safely across the state". Calif. came out with its school safety plan at the end of last year. So far 10.5 million vaccines have been given in the state. Over one in 10 people in Calif are fully vaccinated and more than one in four over 65 are also fully vaccinated.

The latest unemployment data has been released by the state of Calif. showing nearly 21 million claims have been processed since the coronavirus pandemic started. The agency has been called out for taking too long, for fraud and other issues too. And now they say they're taking action to get initial claims done quicker, to work harder to strengthen customer service, fight back fraud, and help victims of identity theft. The dept. has paid out \$126 billion in unemployment benefits in the last year. That is five times the amount during the worst year of the Great Recession.

New guidelines from the CDC say vaccinated grandparents who haven't seen their children and grandchildren for the last year, can now. Yesterday the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention put out new guidelines on anyone past their second dose is able to visit indoors with unvaccinated members of a single household if they're low risk of severe disease and don't have any symptoms. They do not need to wear a mask or physically distance themselves indoors. Also the CDC says fully vaccinated people can gather indoors with others also fully vaccinated. Also those who've been fully vaccinated do not need to quarantine, or be tested after exposure to the coronavirus.

A man accused of murdering his daughter in Hidden Valley almost 4 years ago is finally going to trial. Steven Russell Miller had a remote court appearance related to the shooting death of his daughter in May of 2017. A court trial has been set for April 6th after the court vacated his previous not guilty and not guilty by reason of insanity pleas. Miller was deemed competent to stand trial last year after previously being evaluated and found incompetent. The court has ruled that the defense failed to prove Miller was still incompetent to understand the proceedings against him and that he has been restored to mental competency. He was in a state hospital, now that he's found competent, he's been ordered to be at all court dates. He's due back April 6th.

A large amount of money could be coming to Calif. in the next stimulus package even though the state actually has a more than 25 billion dollar surplus. California's state and local governments could be getting as much as \$40 billion from the \$1.9 trillion recovery that's about to be signed by the President after a final vote by the House. The Senate passed it on party lines over the weekend. Gov. Newsom has asked President Biden for emergency funding for state and local governments after it wasn't part of the package before he became president. The American Rescue Plan also extends unemployment benefits with \$300/week more and a \$1,400 direct payment for some Americans.

Mendocino County has received its first allotment of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. The Public Health Officer Dr. Andy Coren reported the news to the Board of Supervisors yesterday, they've not set any clinics for the new single dose vaccine yet, but said they're considering inoculating the homeless or those who are hard to reach, or home-bound. He also reported the case rate is flattening and the average rate is under 4/100,000 residents and the test positivity rate is 2.7, about a half what it was two weeks ago. He says he's concerned though that as numbers improve, community members will relax too soon and we could have another surge and end back up in restrictive shutdown tiers. The state released new tiers yesterday, and

03/10/21 unfortunately Mendocino stays in the Purple.

Reports of shots fired in Covelo brings out deputies. Mendo Fever reports hearing on the scanner that tribal police and Sheriff's deputies went to the 76000 Block of Henderson Lane for the report of someone running around shooting a firearm. A dispatcher said whoever called it in was the mom of the suspected shooter and said her son shot the door of the home where she was. No word if any arrests were made.

A new chief has signed on at the Lakeport Fire Protection District. He hails from Salt Lake City where Jeffrey James Thomas was a Battalion Chief. The local fire district's board of directors announced Thomas' appointment as the new Lakeport Fire chief, effective March 29th. It comes after Rick Bergem announced he'd retire after over 40 years with the agency. This is also a historic move as Thomas will be the department's first Black fire chief in its 127 year history. He was also apparently the first Black Battalion Chief in Salt Lake and the first Black firefighter and first black fire officer in the entire state of Utah. He was born and raised in Calif. but left when he got a scholarship to play football at the University of Utah.

Like Mendocino and Sonoma counties, Lake will stay in the most restrictive of the reopening tiers, purple. Even though cases and testing positivity rates are down, the county's Public Health Office announced the county stays in the purple, so no reopening of indoor dining, gyms, or indoor entertainment. The Board of Supervisors got the news yesterday and in their weekly update heard from an epidemiologist who says case rates statewide are down at about 2.2 percent positivity for the latest 14-day average. But there are still more than 4,200 people in the hospital and over 1,100 in an ICU. In Lake County the latest data showed 9 cases/100,000 people and testing positivity went up from 5 percent last week to 6.3 percent this week. The county needs to be at 7 cases per 100,000 to get to the red tier. Dr. Gary Pace, the public health officer says he expects the county to get to red in the next few weeks.

Lake County's Public Health Office reports still having issues with the state's vaccination scheduling app, MyTurn. The app was being used for a minute, but it apparently didn't let out of county residents get appointments or go to vaccination clinics. They would get to the clinic and local staff would ask them to leave. The Public Health Officer says it's mandatory for them to go back to using the app in the next week, but the issues remain. He told the Board of Supervisors they're also in a wait and see on how the state will roll out its promise of 40 percent of the vaccine supply for the highest risk communities in over 400 zip codes which includes six in Lake County. The Tribal Health Officer for the county also called into the meeting yesterday and says they've administered nearly 500 vaccines to tribal members and over 1,000 to nontribal members, all with the Moderna vaccine.

The Board of Forestry has come out saying they anticipate another terrible fire season. The board which oversees Cal Fire and comes up with policy, held a meeting on the 2021 fire season, fire safe regulations, timber harvest sales and carbon sequestration. The deputy director of resource management reported to the board on the upcoming fire season, they were planning for the worst, but hoping for the best. She says the state is dry, about 99% abnormally dry, 85% in some form of drought and the Sierra Nevada was at 61% of normal for this time of year. It also remains to be seen if the state will have more fire resources than last season when the pandemic impacted the camp program, where right now, 6 conservation camps are in quarantine.

The superintendent of Fort Bragg schools out with a statement about how well they're doing in the face of the pandemic. The Fort Bragg Unified School District Board of Trustees expressed how impressed they were too with how well teachers and staff have done over the last year, making it the best possible experience for students with teachers, going the extra mile, finding new ways to deliver worthwhile education for kids with new techniques and technology, like Google Meet and Google Classroom. They say they're going to start to regularly acknowledge the hard work and dedication by district staff.

Sonoma County stays in the purple, widespread tier. Even though the county has had a lot less cases, it's still too high to move ahead to the red tier. The Public Health Officer, Dr. Sundari Mase says the county is on the cusp of red which will allow restaurants to have limited, indoor dining, which they haven't seen since last summer. The Press Democrat reports some in the local business community estimate between 75 and 100 businesses are no longer. Over 30,000 people lost their jobs due to the pandemic. In Sonoma County over 300 local residents have died and over 28,500 people have been infected.

Word of wasted vaccine doses across the state, but mostly a trickle. The Press Democrat reports across the state doses had to be destroyed for various reasons. Some taken out too soon and left out too long then spoiled because they need to stay ultra-cold. The World Health Organization reported between 5% to 50% of vaccines are wasted depending on the type of vaccine and rollout. So far in Calif. though less than 0.1% of doses are deemed unusable. So far, the state has administered more than 10.5 million doses, so that adds up to about 10,500 doses wasted. But experts say that's pretty good. The San Francisco Chronicle checked nine Bay Area counties about waste and found the numbers from county clinics were pretty well in line with the state.

[The state dept. of Public Health is reporting some folks who got their Pfizer v](#)  
Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders who came out a big winner in Mendocino County in the 2016 presidential primary is calling out the right wing for trying to take down Gov. Gavin Newsom with a recall effort. The supporters and organizers of the campaign touting having nearly enough petition signatures to trigger the recall and Senator Sanders saying, it's due to the "crime of telling people to wear masks and for listening to scientists during COVID." He tweeted that "extremist Republicans have done enough to undermine democracy already" and "we must all unite to oppose the recall in California." He's one of the higher profile politicians to support Newsom after frustrations with the Gov. last year started the recall ball rolling.

A man from Ukiah's been arrested for being a felon on probation who had pepper spray. Mendocino deputies arrested Luis Manuel Ayala Ortiz Monday after a routine traffic stop for expired registration. The deputy asked for his id and registration and found he was on probation and could be searched. That's when the deputy found he had a canister of Pepper Spray, for which he's prohibited to possess so he was arrested and booked into jail on \$15,000.00 bail.

A couple who announced they were taking over Main Street Bicycles in Lakeport were vandalized soon after their announcement on social media. Matt Sesser and Hannah Lee posted the bike shop was under new ownership and their hours. The next day, they say, they were vandalized. Someone smashed in the front window of the business and ripped off an expensive bicycle. The Record Bee reports the last owner was arrested for child pornography and the two took over after that. The newspaper reports one of the new owners found a rock at the scene with a note on it, but they didn't say what the note said. The bike was apparently worth about \$1,600. A man found seriously injured in Clearlake Oaks has reportedly died. Police have not identified the man yet but say he was found yesterday afternoon near Clark's Island and E. State Highway 20. He was described as a White, middle aged man who was found unconscious with visible head injuries and a puncture wound on his stomach. He was taken to a hospital but died.

03/11/21 Police are treating it as a murder, and an autopsy is planned.

A man in court on child porn charges has pleaded no contest, essentially admitting the crime. Just a day after Jeffery Cramer's hearing, where it was agreed they'd move forward to a preliminary hearing, he entered the plea. He was the previous owner of Main Street Bicycles where warrants were served. They were also served at his home and police took digital devices from both locations. They found he had uploaded child pornography at least five times between August 2019 and February 2020 on social media pages. He was also a high school mountain biking coach in Clear Lake and Kelseyville. He will reportedly only serve felony probation for two years, but also faces a jail sentence which is up to the judge and could be about a year. He also has to go thru a yearlong sex offender counseling program.

Sonoma County could start to move into the Red Tier over the weekend. Even though the state has the county in the Purple, most restrictive tier, the state may change the tier structure. The gov. announced a new tier system based on when 2 million people in the most at risk neighborhoods get their vaccine. The Press Democrat reports, we're at over 1.9 million so the metrics could change as soon as tomorrow. Sonoma is currently at 9 cases per 100,000 residents, the case rate will change to get to Red, from 7 to 10 cases per 100,000 people, removing an obstacle for the county, and possibly Lake and Mendocino to move forward too. But it's ultimately up to the state to decide which counties change tiers.

Even though the state has a healthy surplus, the new 1.9 trillion dollar COVID relief package could send over \$150 billion to California's economy. About half of that goes directly to those who qualify for the \$1,400 direct payments and to expanded unemployment benefits. Nearly \$16 billion to public and private schools and \$3.6 billion to help the state with its vaccination effort. Money also goes to transportation hubs and agencies and to childcare.

About 100 people have shown up to hear about the purple sea urchin from Reef Check, The Nature Conservancy and UC Davis as part of the Reef Check Kelp Restoration Project. One part of the project was to regrow the red urchins population and help the kelp forest regrow in the ideal conditions off the Mendocino Coast. So they're gathering purple urchins and removing them to see if the kelp forest will regenerate. It's been wrecked by warm water and the overpopulation of the purple urchins. That in turn starved abalone and commercially viable red urchins were overtaken. The program was funded by the Ocean Protection Council, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Watermen's Alliance and is running in two locations in Noyo Bay. It was delayed due to the pandemic and just started.

Concerns in Lake County that vaccination doses may be going to out of county residents. The concern brought to the Lake County Board of Supervisors Tuesday and they decided to have volunteers track how many non-County residents are coming to local vaccine sites. But when Blue Shield totally takes over the vaccine distribution, which it's transitioning into now, counties have to allow non-residents to make appointments. The Board Chairman commented maybe they should send bills to surrounding counties for the doses they lose to their residents.

A group in Southern Calif. is helping people navigate the confusing online signups for COVID19 vaccines. The grassroots volunteer corps run by people who have flexible schedules, can work a computer and are near one frequently. They're helping others in major metropolitan areas where many thousands are trying to all get the same appointment slots. The volunteers help those who otherwise can't figure the system out. County officials have hotlines across the state, and there are mobile clinics too. There are community health workers being hired and partnering with faith communities and community organizations to get vaccines into arms. The volunteer groups are reported to be an important step in getting the vaccines to low-income, disabled and isolated people.

Congressman Jared Huffman tackling the problem of folks not being able to pay their water bills due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The North Coast Congressman put out a statement saying the new stimulus package from the federal government, the American Rescue Plan, includes money for water assistance. He says the last year water has been proven to be a "critical resource" and especially with more people staying home, there's been more personal water usage. In fact a statewide study shows about 1.6 million or 12% of households across Calif. have not been able to pay their water bills creating a \$1 billion statewide household water debt. So Huffman and some of his democratic colleagues sent a letter to both House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy about the problem and stated the \$70 million dollars California is getting is not enough to address the amount of total debt.

The state says it's finally finished clearing metal, concrete, ash and contaminated soil from nearly 1,400 properties after last summer and fall's fires. That was at the properties of owners who wanted the state to do the work at no cost to them so they can start the rebuilding process. State contractors come out and take away any charred debris and also trees that were burned and found to be hazardous. They've also done some erosion control on 150 cleared properties. In August fires hit 18 counties statewide, and in September, there were another 10 counties. Over 4 million acres burned across the state.

A new report says President Biden's \$1.9 trillion relief package could cut California's child poverty rate in half. Economists and progressives say a provision in the American Rescue Plan is "revolutionary". It sends money to most families who have children with a one-year expansion of the child tax credit. They say it could potentially lift millions of Californians out of poverty this year, especially immigrant families that have suffered some of the worst health and economic effects from the COVID19 pandemic. It's only a one year policy which some say may be a pilot-like program to see if a permanent child allowance could work in the United States. So families will get regular payments up to \$3,600/year for each child under 6 and \$3,000 for each child under 18.

A group of US senators, hailing from both parties are interested in making Daylight Saving Time (DST) permanent. Most states observe DST, which incidentally starts again this Sunday morning at 2 a.m. It then ends on the first Sunday of November. So there are just 4 months of standard time. The Sunshine Protection Act was introduced by Texas Senator Sen. Marco Rubio. 15 states, including Calif. have voted to make DST permanent but it cannot be unless the federal government also makes the move. Hawaii and Arizona do not observe DST.

The Elk Emergency Planning Committee is reminding, we're gaining on fire season. Scientists say it could be another mega drought year, not just for Calif., but for most of the western states. The Planning Committee says Elk has only received about 25 percent of its normal rainfall. They say it seems early, but now is the time to get go bags and emergency kits together. They remind also if you haven't looked at this items in some time, go through them and replenish water, batteries, medications, snacks, and anything else perishable. They've posted the best items to have handy on the Elk Community Services District website (elkcsd.org).

A man from Covelo's been arrested for elder abuse and shooting into a home at his parents while apparently high. Mendocino Deputies got a call that one Randy Maple was wandering around a property with a shotgun, that he discharged multiple times. A Round Valley Tribal Officer was there first and reported to deputies he was shooting into the air and reloading. But he was grabbed first. Maple had a single shot shotgun, with a pistol grip and an 18.5" barrel, but he's prohibited due to previous run ins with the law. He was also found to probably be high on something. Deputies say he had a confrontation with his elderly parents in the home, came out and started shooting. The 51 year old was charged with various crimes including shooting into an inhabited dwelling, elder abuse and possessing a firearm while under the influence of a controlled substance and held on

03/12/21 \$100,000.00 bail.

A man from Ukiah's been arrested after a routine traffic stop for a code violation. Deputies say they stopped the driver in the 1700 block of North State Street Tuesday. The passenger, Bobby Lee Hill had an active warrant for his arrest so he was booked into jail on \$15,000.00 bail.

After an unrelated incident in Covelo, deputies say they were flagged down by a driver on Tuesday on Highway 162. They found the driver was bleeding on his face and covered in blood. He says two other men had tried to kidnap him during a prearranged meeting for a drug transaction involving the sale of marijuana. He told deputies one of the men had a fixed blade knife and demanded he get into his own vehicle. And says they used the knife to force the issue. He was then driven to another area and beaten and robbed of money and marijuana and other drugs. Those involved are apparently still on the run. The victim was taken to a hospital for treatment.

Mendocino College has put out a statement they're continuing to conduct mostly online learning, at least thru the summer. The Superintendent/President Tim Karas made the announcement, that they're transitioning to in person learning in the fall. He also says with the help of the county, all interested employees have been able to get their COVID-19 vaccine. They're got what he's calling a "Transition Group", which is classified staff, faculty, and management leaders who are coming up with a safe way to bring students back. They are asking for student input for the fall semester where he says there will be expanded on ground/face-to-face courses. They will not be 100% back to normal by fall, but Karas says they should be increasing classes at their campuses.



The state's recreational salmon fishery is opening in a couple of weeks in the Monterey management area. The fishery will be all the way from Pigeon Point down south to the U.S./Mexico border, but all other areas of the California coast are staying closed for now. The rest of the dates will be outlined next month. This opening is April 3rd. The San Francisco and Fort Bragg management areas were also supposed to open then, but salmon fishery representatives and the Pacific Fishery Management Council decided to delay due to poor stock forecasts.

A man from Ukiah's arrested after reports from a man in the passenger seat of a car being rammed by a minivan in the Safeway parking lot. The man said they were trying to drive to the police department, but the minivan was preventing that. The dispatcher apparently could hear screeching tires in the background and they could see it happening on local surveillance cameras. The male driver of the minivan was identified as Jaime Gutierrez, who was detained. Cops say the female driver of the car had dated the driver of the minivan and they had kids together and recently separated. The guy was apparently tracking her on her cellphone. Gutierrez was arrested and an emergency protective order was granted for the woman.

A wrong way driver reported by the CHP in Ukiah. Scanner traffic says the driver was headed north in the southbound lanes the 101 near the Perkins offramp. The driver of a silver Toyota sedan was pulled over for driving the wrong way on the highway.

New statewide guidance on the pandemic says breweries, wineries and distilleries can reopen soon, but only outdoors, and they don't have to serve food. If a county is still in either the purple or red tier, the most widespread, then customers have to call to get a reservation and can only stay at the establishment up to 90 minutes. Also the business will have to stop all on-site consumption by 8 p.m. It goes into effect on Sunday. The businesses that are in higher tier counties can open indoors with 25% or 100 people, whichever is less and in the yellow tier; at 50% or 200 people, whichever is fewer. But bars who do not serve food stay completely closed in purple and red tiers but can reopen outside in the orange tier and indoors in yellow with 25% or 100 people, whichever is fewer.

A judge has approved of the settlement between Sutter Health and those suing, including the California Attorney General for alleged anticompetitive practices. The lawsuit also by the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union and Employers Benefit Trust against Sutter which claimed higher health care costs in Northern California compared to other places in the state. The network of hospitals includes one in Lakeport. The Attorney General says the preliminary settlement is a major step toward "making health care more accessible and affordable for patients who need it, especially for Northern California patients served by Sutter". With that Sutter will pay \$575 million to employers, unions and others covered involved in the class action, limit how much they can charge, increase transparency and other practices outlined in the lawsuit.

The Ukiah City Council has approved the Housing Overlay Zone we've been telling you about. This week at their meeting council members voted to create the first ever Zone so that 3 parcels, all on East Gobbi Street, can move forward with development with just one building permit as long as they meet certain city standards/aesthetics. A mixed use development is being proposed at the site, which sits near the Rail Trail. And the City Manager told the council they were working on ways so there wouldn't be too much traffic around the area after, including possibly installing a traffic light at Main Street and Gobbi.

State Senator Mike McGuire's been pushing some bills thru that have been approved in their first committees. One of them to make sure journalists are protected when they cover demonstrations, marches, protests, and rallies. So that police cannot obstruct, detain, assault, or otherwise prevent the press from fulfilling their constitutional mandate to report on events. Also one of his bills to try to help get hospitality workers back to their jobs passed its committee hearing this week unanimously. That would be to work with Visit California on a recovery campaign to entice in-state travel to restaurants, hotels, and local destinations. And finally his bill to provide equal protection for equal work for seasonal and full time Cal Fire firefighters.

Both Lake and Sonoma counties are moving to the Red Tier in California's Blueprint to Reopen the Economy's new metrics tied to vaccinations. The state Department of Public Health confirmed the expectation that Lake County will be among 13 new counties to advance to the Red Tier Tuesday. That means indoor business reopenings as of next Wednesday. Dr. Gary Pace the Public Health Officer for Lake County says as expected the county is moving ahead, with the changes the governor announced of getting 2 million doses administered in California's most vulnerable communities, including several in Lake. Changes included in the Red Tier at 10 cases per 100,000, up from 7. The county is also expecting to get 2,000-3,000 vaccine doses in the next few weeks.

Since the state has reached that 2 million vaccine threshold, Sonoma also moves to the Red Tier, but before Lake, this weekend, not Tuesday. The State Secretary of Health and Human Services, Dr. Mark Ghaly, confirmed Sonoma and 12 other counties are eligible to open more businesses and public activities. Sonoma has been in the Purple, widespread tier for 7 months. Mendocino is also noted as being able to move forward, but the county nor the public health office has posted on their websites or on Facebook. The Red Tier means local restaurants can resume indoor dining at 25%, gyms at 10% capacity and grocery stores can allow full capacity.

At the same time the Public Health Office noted another death. That makes it 45 people in Mendocino County who have died from COVID-19. This was a 57 year old White woman from Ukiah. There were also 4 more cases reported today for a total of 3,871.

Lake and Mendocino Counties, along with Sonoma have all entered the Red Tier. Mendocino and Sonoma over the weekend, Lake on Wednesday. The Blueprint for a Safer Economy Framework has shifted as the state hit 2 million doses of vaccine in California's most vulnerable communities. So this means, restaurants can open with limited capacity, same with fitness facilities, and other indoor businesses. Grocery stores can open with 100% capacity. Lake County will allow in person learning for students in higher grades, mostly in the hybrid model. The Public Health Officer for Lake reports the county should be getting another 2,000-3,000 vaccine doses and that more than 10,000 Lake County residents have received at least one

03/15/21

dose, plus those in Tribal communities. The Sheriff's Dept. has come across an illegal marijuana grow in Hopland. Last Thursday the dept.'s Marijuana Enforcement Team served a search warrant and found over 3,400 growing cannabis plants and pulled them. They also detained five people there who deputies say were recruited from Sonoma County and were being paid to live there. The property owner was reportedly planning to sell the marijuana to a dispensary. There were ten environmental related violations, but there were no arrests yet as they continue to investigate. They will send all info to the Mendocino County District Attorney's Office for potential criminal charges.

Ukiah Schools allowing more grades for in person learning as the county hits the Red Tier. The Superintendent of Schools put out a statement Friday, that since the county is moving along, so is the School District, allowing 7-12th graders to come back to campus. Parents also have the opportunity to keep their kids at home too. Starting Thursday kids can start trickling back into class. The Superintendent thanking parents and students for their patience, and says they're excited to welcome students back. They're offering tests for any student, but it's not mandatory. Another piece of info, youth indoor sports can return to competition if they follow strict requirements, including daily testing around each sport and competition for indoor sports and weekly for outdoor sports.

Since over 2 million doses of the COVID19 vaccine have been administered in the more at-risk communities of Calif., Mendocino County, along with a dozen others have been able to move to the Red Tier. The Public Health Officer, Dr. Andy Coren reports it's due to the hard work, the county got to the next Tier in the state's Blueprint for a Safer Economy. As of yesterday, grocery stores can open to 100% capacity, retailers can open to 50% capacity, same with shopping centers. Museums and churches or other places of worship at 25% capacity. Movie theaters at either 100 people OR 25% capacity, whichever is fewer. Gyms have a max of 10% capacity. Restaurants including wineries, breweries and distilleries serving meals: may now have indoor activities with a max of 100 people or 25% capacity, whichever is fewer. Bars remain closed. Long-term care facilities: may restart in-person visits, while doing screenings for both residents and visitors, and masks.

The owners of Lakeport Cinema 5 and Lakeport Auto Movies are stepping up, turning their locations into vaccination clinics. The Lake County Administrative Officer says the Lotter family is also not charging to use their sites. The same family lost their location in Paradise, due to the Camp Fire...

A woman from Leggett has been arrested after a domestic violence incident was reported to the Sheriff's office. Deputies say they got a call to a home, finding Sara Godfrey inside. They found she was living with her boyfriend there. The two had been drinking and got into an argument, which escalated into a physical altercation. Apparently, the man tried to leave, and Godfrey tried stopping him, tossing a glass beer bottle his way, hitting him in the shoulder. Deputies say she then chased him and hit him in the face twice. They say he had visible injuries on his face. Godfrey was arrested on domestic violence battery charges and held on \$25,000.00 bail.

A woman from Ukiah's been arrested for vandalism after reports of a bunch of cars with slashed tires. The Sheriff's Office also reports the woman, they've identified as Kimberlee Thompson was also running around with a knife, chasing people. She was id'd to deputies when they arrived. They found her with a folding knife, she was ordered to drop it, but tried running and ignored deputies. They finally nabbed her, then found 19 vehicles had their tires slashed. She's arrested for vandalism and criminal threats and held on \$20,000 bail. Deputies were working on a tally of all the damage.

A man from Ukiah's been arrested for being drunk in public. Deputies got a call Saturday night about a suspicious person. As a deputy arrived, dispatch reported there was also a report a fire started inside a home. The deputy saw a large plume of smoke coming out of a home close by. The person calling it in says someone started the fire and they tried stopping him. He was identified as Pedro Reynaga who the reporting deputy said showed signs of being high on a stimulant and drunk too. Reynaga also lived in the home on fire with his mom. But the Deputy couldn't get inside because it was too hot. But mom wasn't there. Reynaga was arrested for felony arson and booked into the Mendocino County Jail and held on \$100,000.00 bail.

A fire reported at a business in Fort Bragg. Early yesterday police reported to the 500 block of N Main Street and found the building fully engulfed in flames, threatening other structures. Officers quickly went to evacuate surrounding buildings and totally closed N Main Street down so firefighters could quickly and safely knock down the fire at the Fort Bragg Auto Shop. Police officers stayed until the fire was put out. They're not sure the cause of the fire and say there also didn't seem to be anything suspicious at the location.

PG&E is beginning to make payments to communities in Northern Calif. victim to wildfires caused by the utility company's failing equipment. Those with claims are supposed to get around 30% of the amount they are owed as part of the company's massive bankruptcy settlement. There were over 71,000 claims for businesses and homes, and also due to deaths caused by the fires. The first installment to those with substantiated claims. The trustee in charge of the whole thing says they're working fast to verify the claims, but there's a lot of regulations to peel back before the payments go out. He says they're doing that as fast as they can, while following the letter of the law. The Fire Victims Trust manages the \$13.5 billion dollars PG&E agreed to pay out for the October 2017 firestorm and and two fires in Butte County, one in 2015 and the Camp fire in 2018.

A public hearing is set with the Lake County Board of Supervisors regarding a county-owned property labeled surplus which is part of a land swap with the state so the Lakeport Armory can be turned into a new sheriff's administrative headquarters. The matter at their tomorrow morning after supervisors hear an update from the Public Health Officer Dr. Gary Pace on the pandemic. After the board will consider resolutions and hear from the public on the property on 18th Ave. in Clearlake which is surplus. They will then authorize the property exchange agreement with the state of California for the Lakeport Armory property for a bigger and more modern Sheriff's headquarters. And in exchange the state can use the 15.5-acre property in Clearlake for an affordable housing development.

In Lakeport the City Council will get an update on the pandemic and discuss goals for the next fiscal year.

The Public Health Officer Dr. Gary Pace will update the council tomorrow night about their COVID-19 numbers. The council is also going to present a proclamation to Pace, who's leaving the job next month, to honor his work during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Two people have died in a head on crash outside Middletown. It happened Saturday night on Highway 29 near the entrance to the Bar X Ranch. The California Highway Patrol reports a white van and a black pickup truck tangled together, blocking the highway. They noted major injuries to two people trapped in one of the cars. An air ambulance was requested at the Middletown Fire Station, but one of the trapped victims died before they arrived. When firefighters tried getting the second victim out, they found they were also gone. The CHP had to bring in light towers and heavy debris removal equipment to clear the roadway.

Close call in Caspar as a vaccination clinic was set up, but only about a third of the appointments filled. Mendocino Coast Clinics, Adventist Health and local pharmacies were also administering the vaccine on the coast on Friday, so only 200 out of the 750 appointments were filled. But apparently before the end of the day several hundred more appointments were filled and over 80 people were on a waiting list, no shots were wasted. Volunteers getting the word out helped get all of the doses into arms. Since calls were being made at first to those eligible in tiers 1A and 1B, later in the afternoon, the age requirement was lowered to 16 years. Board Supervisor Ted Williams and others sent texts around that there were spots available. He had 5,000 on his list.

The National League of Cities has elected Lakeport City Councilmember Mireya Turner to be on three committees. The group advocates for the 19,000 cities, towns and villages, covering over 218 million Americans. They work with leaders in those cities, all similar in size, type of other characteristics. Turner is representing not only the City of Lakeport, but also the Redwood Empire Division of the League. That includes not only Lake, but also Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino and Sonoma counties. She's on the Community and Economic Development Committee which comes up with policies and works on issues such as housing, community and economic development, land use, recreation and parks, historic preservation, and international competitiveness.

The state Insurance Commissioner says car insurance companies have been gauging residents during the pandemic, overcharging millions of dollars. Commissioner Ricardo Lara says the insurers must come up with a plan to give money back to drivers. Apparently, some of them did cut back on premiums by about 9% between March and September 2020, but they were supposed to cut as high as 17% due to a major drop off of property damage and bodily injury claims. State Farm said earlier it was going to send back \$400 million to 3.5 million California policyholders.

Someone in Fort Bragg reportedly found a double-amputee veteran in his wheelchair, sitting in the middle of a sidewalk outside a CVS Pharmacy. Harry Swets, used to live in Fort Bragg. Friday, March 3rd, the veteran was left in the area by a Veteran's Affairs shuttle bus. Someone spotted him trying to maneuver himself along the sidewalk in socks and no shoes. It was also a cold rainy day. The woman who saw him posted his picture on Facebook. His daughter saw it, but she lives in Santa Rosa. The woman who found him called police. The man was apparently looking for his bank, but it had gone out of business while he was in the hospital in San Francisco. They left him there with all of his personal items. The hospital says he was discharged following all procedures. In the end the woman who found him and a local man helped pay for Swets to stay in a motel. Then he went to Ukiah the next day on a bus where his daughter met him.

That was quick. As the county announced they were once again looking for a Cannabis Czar, today the county announced a new hire. The Board of Supervisors unanimously approved hiring Kristin Nevedal to manage the county's cannabis program. She started today. Nevedal has experience in the field. She was the co-director for the Humboldt Institute of Interdisciplinary Cannabis Research and an associate faculty member for the Humboldt State University Sociology Department. She was appointed by the Governor to be on several of the Bureau of Cannabis Control subcommittees. She is the founder of the International Cannabis Advisory Farmers Association and was an education director for the Emerald Cup and the co-founder and vice president of the Humboldt Growers Association.

Lake County's unemployment is down a tad. Lake Co News reports the county was at 8.8 percent for January, slightly down from a month before when it was 9%. The news site also reports state and federal unemployment was slightly off too. The rate for the state down 0.3 percent to 9.0 percent in January with a loss of almost 70,000 jobs. One year ago, the unemployment in the state was 4.2 percent. In Mendocino County, the rate was 7.7%, and in Colusa, 15.6 percent, Glenn, 7.9 percent, Napa, 8.6 percent and Sonoma, 7.1 percent. The highest, as usual in the state, was in Imperial County, and Marin was the lowest in January. The hardest hit in the state, leisure and hospitality, then education and health services, manufacturing and construction.

03/16/21

A company's being hired by the city of Clearlake to help develop the downtown strategic vision. The City Council voted unanimously last week for the City Manager to enter into a contract with Downtown Strategies, the sister company to another the city's worked with Retail Strategies. That firm was hired to help keep retailers in business, and bring in new ones. The contract was paused during the pandemic, but has picked back up. Now Downtown Strategies has presented what it came up with to the city council after they came to town, and drew up some ideas. The company came up with low and no cost strategies to work on over three to five years depending how much the city can spend.

A woman from Novato has been arrested in connection to a crash near Middletown that ended in the death of two people from Clearlake. The Lake County Sheriff's Office identified the victims yesterday as 47 year old Miguel Dominguez and 53 year old Cassandra Rollicheck. The CHP reported 21 year old Keilah Coyle was driving a Ford F-250 pickup Saturday night headed south on Highway 29 and because, they say, due to how drunk she was, she drove over the double yellow lines and into the path of a 2000 GMC van head on. Coyle rolled her truck. She had minor injuries. The other two had to be extricated from the van but died at the scene. The highway was closed for about five hours due to the crash. Coyle was arrested early Sunday for vehicular manslaughter while intoxicated with gross negligence, felony DUI and causing injury, and felony DUI and causing injury with a blood alcohol content above 0.08. She's held on \$2 million bail.

A fire reported in Albion. Firefighters were on the scene yesterday in the 28000 block of Navarro Ridge Road where they say a woman was inside, then got out with burned hands. They had a chopper on the scene. The woman then flown to the UC Davis burn center. The fire was knocked down quick and firefighters stayed on scene to mop up. No word yet how badly the 42-year-old woman was burned.

The Gov. has reportedly formed a political action committee to help raise money to fight the possible coming recall election. His committee is called "Stop the Republican Recall" and is being represented by Newsom as a Republican power grab by supporters of former President Donald Trump and extremists. The Gov. spoke on the matter yesterday saying white supremacist and right-wing militia groups like the Proud Boys and the Three Percenters are the organizers of the recall. He was on TV last night saying there's worries about violence after the insurrection at the US Capitol in January. Organizers have reportedly collected more than 2 million petition signatures to get the issue on the ballot. They say 38% of those who signed are Independents And Democrats.

The Gov. says if it should happen that Sen. Dianne Feinstein retires before her term is up, he'll appoint a Black woman. Feinstein's term isn't up until 2024, but there's been concern raised about her mental capacity since the Supreme Court confirmation of Amy Coney Barrett. She's also 87 year's old, and the oldest sitting US senator. She won her last re-election in 2018. The Gov. was asked what he'd do during an interview last night on MSNBC where he was also asked about the recall effort against him. Feinstein for her part has been questioned about her memory and said in December she had no plans to step down. After former Senator Kamala Harris became Vice President, there were no Black women in the chamber.

Calif. lawmakers looking at ways for election officials not to toss ballots if a voter's signature doesn't exactly match what's on file. The Democratic led legislature is working to get rid of the rule where election officials compare signatures, then can disqualify ballots if the signatures don't match. But some people don't always sign their name the same. Also, any changes with the Democratic led legislature could bring attention to the Democratic Governor's possible recall election. But any bill that becomes law on the matter, wouldn't take effect for about a year, so it would be beyond any recall election. That would be this year.

The Willits School District has some reopening dates. The School Board and District staff, teachers, parents and residents on a Zoom call last Wednesday discussing reopening plans. Kindergarten through 6th grade starts tomorrow at Brookside and Blosser Elementary's and Baechtel Grove Middle School (BGMS). There were Zoom classes yesterday and today so teachers could get their classrooms ready. They will allow for 15 students per class. Then on Monday, Sherwood is opening kindergarten through eighth, Sanhedrin 9-12th and Baechtel is adding grades 7th and 8th. A week beyond, on the 28th, Willits is opening for 9th and 10th grade. All Independent Study kids can come on site if there's room for them. Finally on April 12th High Schoolers in grades 11 and 12 return.

The Downtown Streetscape Project is back at work. Crews downtown Saturday making up for lost time due to bad weather. The project has been ongoing and is set to be done in July. Crews could be pouring new cement on the new sidewalks in the next few weeks on the east side of State Street between Perkins and Mill streets. The city is reportedly in touch with individual businesses to schedule the cement pours so some businesses could lose access for a time to their front doors. Underground electric continues to be installed, potholing is happening in some areas, which causes quite a lot of noise, that's near the Civic Center, and East Church St. will be closed intermittently between 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The state's looking for ways to slow or stop the use of microplastics related to drinking water. As of 2018 state law there would be four years of testing to make sure there were no microplastics in drinking water, then the state has to come up with ways to help water providers and consumers figure out what levels may be safe to drink. The state Water Resources Control Board is putting out some of the results in July. Some water suppliers say the process will be costly and tedious, but researchers say people could absorb more microplastics just by breathing. But research does show it's been an environmental contaminant and one that effects animals around the world.

Police in Fort Bragg report to the scene of a car into a building. Police say a gold colored Toyota Tacoma pickup had minor damage to the front right side after landing into the front yard of a residential building in the 600 block of Stewart Street. Officers also saw a white Nissan Maxima with major damage and air bags deployed nearby, blocking one street. Officers talked to the drivers of both and checked with those living in the building and say there were no injuries. The vehicles were towed from the scene. And now police are asking anyone who may know anything about the situation to call.

Fort Bragg Police are reminding they have a trespass letter program whereby if someone trespasses on your property police can make an arrest on your behalf. It's for individuals and businesses. You can also just grab one of the letters online at the police department website, go in person to the department, or get one from a police officer. The forms can be mailed or turned in online. They allow officers to advise individuals of trespassing on their property too. The letters last one year and have to be renewed annually. They've now expanded the program too so you can do the whole thing over the phone. They're currently auditing old letters to see if they need renewing.

Ten years after that giant Tsunami that decimated parts of Japan and traveled out to California ports and harbors, damaging them too, the California Geological Survey has a couple of new maps for the North Coast. The Tsunami Hazard Area maps cover Del Norte and Mendocino counties. They were made using new technology and data from the 2009 maps. They show how far inland a surge on this side of the world could be devastating. They also show a small buffer zone outside of the inundation area that might help locally so local evacuation plans can be made. The changes are supposedly not too dramatic, but here in Mendocino County, where we're pretty well protected from tsunamis due to huge cliffs, the new map shows a higher tsunami hazard up river valleys.

A young man from Ukiah accused of rape is skipping another jury trial and pleads out instead. 24 year old Zachary Barajas was supposed to be in court next Monday for the retrial related to the rape of a minor. In July of 2019 Barajas was found guilty by a jury of one count, but they could not reach a unanimous verdict on a separate count of forcible rape of a separate minor. So instead of a retrial, he admitted criminal responsibility for 2 other felonies, including unlawful sexual intercourse with a separate female. To be done with the whole case, he'll have to accept a prison sentence of about 12 years. Since these are violent felonies, he can only

03/17/21 skim 15% off for good behavior. He'll be formally sentenced in May.



The Mendocino County Water Resiliency Task Force is working with the State Water Resources Control Board regarding the threat of serious drought in the Upper Russian River. The Task Force working on the issue includes representatives from the City of Ukiah, Russian River Flood Control & Water Conservation Improvement District, Mendocino County Farm Bureau, Upper Russian River Water Agency, Resource Conservation District, County Water Agency, and others. The state can now impose restrictions, but has not said yet. But the State Water Board has said without immediate rain that brings up storage levels in local reservoirs, they could look at some regulations in coming months to protect water rights and to make sure there are adequate flows for salmon.

An online town hall with representatives from Mendocino County and the cannabis community along with the Cannabis Business Association on Phase 3 of the county's recreational legal cannabis industry. Mendo Voice was on hand and their publisher was the moderator. 2 county supervisors and the new Cannabis Program Manager were there along with the Board Chair of Mendocino Cannabis Alliance and a cannabis lawyer. They discussed the permitting process, how they will be regulated and reviewed based on noise, air quality and aesthetics. As part of the next phase, the new Cannabis Program Manager said there should be a list for law enforcement of all businesses.

As the recall effort heats up, it's starting to look a lot like the 2003 recall of Gray Davis, when dozens of people tried to win the former Governor's job. Another Republican has entered the field of candidates, former Congressman Doug Ose (Oh-see) announced yesterday he'll try to unseat Gov. Gavin Newsom. Newsom has announced he thinks former Pres. Trump's followers are behind the recall against him. Plus he started a PAC to raise money to fight to keep his job. Ose is the third well-known Republican to enter the race, including former San Diego Mayor Kevin Faulconer and businessman John Cox, who ran against Newsom and lost in a landslide in 2018. When Arnold Schwarzenegger won, there were 135 on the ballot.

After the ongoing Ghost Ship trials have come to an end, the City of Oakland reports being on the hook for nearly \$13.5 million in legal fees. The fire at the old warehouse filled to the brim with art killed 36 people. The master tenant Derick Almerna had been in jail but got out due to the pandemic. He was sentenced to 12 years, but it's home confinement and with time served, it looks like he won't be in prison. Besides the city paying out millions to defend itself against the fire civil lawsuit, \$33 million was agreed to as a settlement with the victims families and a seriously injured survivor. Almerna lives in Lake County and is serving his home confinement there.

The largest school district in Northern Calif. is heading back to in person learning. Next Tuesday thousands of families head back, but it's only 30% of Elk Grove's 60,000 students who are returning this spring. A School District spokesperson says it's different for each campus, some have 60% returning to campus. They're starting it all with a staggered schedule. Students in Pre-K to third grade first with hybrid learning. So teachers will tend to both in person and online younger students. Elk Grove is in the Sacramento region and was the first school district to close a year ago.

A fundraiser has begun for the Fort Bragg auto shop owner and his employees who lost the building to a fire. Gordon's Automotive burned last weekend. The community is raising money on GoFundMe and as of yesterday had almost \$11,000. The campaign was started by a Fort Bragg High School teacher. Firefighters say they're not sure how the fire started. The fire chief said it was so intense, they may not know the ignition point, but are considering an electrical issue high up in the rafters in one corner of the building. There were no injuries in the Sunday fire.

The Congressional Art Competition is accepting entries from high schoolers. The art eventually gets showcased in the US Capitol. And there's a winner for each congressional district who gets a free trip to Washington D.C. They're accepting digital submissions this year due to the pandemic. The deadline to enter is April 23rd. Congressman Jared Huffman announced the competition is open for digital submissions and there's a new submission process to go with it. The artwork that wins is hung for a year and the winner is entered into a contest for a scholarship to attend Savannah College of Art and Design too. They're accepting paintings, drawings, collages, prints, mixed media, computer generated art and photography.

Lake County has officially entered the Red Tier in the state's Blueprint for a Safer Economy. Yesterday, the Public Health Officer announced the county has gotten out of the Purple Tier and all changes go into effect today. Mendocino and Sonoma entered on Sunday. There were no counties in the state that moved to a more restrictive tier. 11 counties remain the purple tier, 42 in red, four in orange and one in the yellow, or "minimal," tier. As of yesterday Lake County announced a total of 3,224 confirmed cases and 43 deaths. The case rate is reported to be the lowest since the first part of October. The county's public health office reports the county won't be able to go to the even less restrictive orange tier until at least April 6th.

The tiers of who can get their vaccine in Calif. have opened up some, but there are still limited supplies. So previously eligible residents could run into obstacles until supply meets demand. The homeless, transit workers and the largest category, those 16 to 64 with high risks or disease including diabetes, kidney or lung disease, women who are pregnant or those with Down syndrome. That adds up to 6 million more eligible for a total of 17 to 19 million — or about half the state. It also comes at time when counties begin moving to less restrictive tiers in the Blueprint for a Safer Economy in Calif. Sutter Health is prioritizing second doses, Kaiser is vaccinating members and non-members, and county health departments working with giant vaccination sites and pharmacies are doing shots too.

Schools bringing kids back for in person learning are preparing for another epidemic, serious mental health conditions. Since the COVID19 pandemic began we've been hearing about students who are feeling lonely, but are also experiencing serious mental health crises, like fear, upheaval and grief. Some because they've lost friends or family members and many families have at least one jobless parent. A report by the Center for Reinventing Public Education says kids visiting mental health professionals spiked dramatically the past year. And the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention says 1 in 4 young adults say they've considered suicide because of the pandemic.

A new campaign is being considered in Ukiah to protect Monarch butterflies. The Daily Journal reports cities and communities are taking a so-called, "Mayor's Monarch Pledge". They're agreeing to commit to create habitat for the Monarch butterfly and pollinators, and to teach residents about them. The Ukiah City Council is considering the pledge at their meeting tonight. On the agenda it says the butterflies contribute to the health of our planet. And the paper reports the city's mayor is working with a group of environmentalists and naturalists on the idea too. The meeting's at 6 p.m. online. You can watch on the city's website.

A crash on the 101 in Cloverdale has killed a man from Upper Lake. The CHP reports the crash happened yesterday morning just north of the Highway 128 offramp and ended up blocking the northbound lanes of the freeway for almost five hours. The patrol reports the man who died had been driving a Kia Forte, hit a guardrail and rolled after losing control of the vehicle. There were two passengers in the small car too. Then apparently another vehicle slammed head on into the Kia as the men were emerging from the car, the driver was thrown to the ground. He was pronounced dead on the scene. His name has not been released. His passengers were taken to the hospital, one with moderate injuries and the other with major injuries, but not life-threatening.

03/18/21

A burglary has been reported by a Chiropractor in Ukiah. The police dept. reports getting a call from Barr Family Chiropractic Tuesday that they had been burglarized, vandalized and money was taken too. Police say an outside door was forced open that morning, \$2,000.00 was taken and the business had been ransacked. When police went and checked other businesses they found a couple others also had their doors forced open. Body Glow Tanning had surveillance equipment running at the time their business was also ransacked. Police say the footage from their video cam showed a man inside. He's identified as Donald Morin who they say used a crow bar to break into desks and cabinets and take items worth about \$1,000.00. They found a third business was also hit. They eventually arrested Morin and found he had the stolen items. He's booked into jail for burglary/looting during a state of emergency and held on \$45,000.00.

A woman in Covelo's been arrested after a routine vehicle check where she was found slumped over. Deputies say they saw a suspicious vehicle and contacted the driver, Shareen Marrufo, who was having a difficult time staying awake. They spotted a booze bottle and conducted Field Sobriety Tests. Sheriff's Dispatch told the deputy the woman had a warrant, so she was arrested. They found pepper spray on her and couple of used glass pipes, usually used for methamphetamine. She's booked into jail for possession of pepper spray and possession of drug paraphernalia and held on \$15,000.00 bail.

A 60 year old man from Willits has been arrested on weapons charges. A Mendocino deputy conducted a traffic stop and found Jerry Degurse and a female passenger. He was found to be on probation and not allowed to own or possess firearms or ammunition. A search of his car ensued since he was also found to have 6 arrest warrants. The deputy found an ice chest filled with a bunch of ammunition in various calibers. So he was arrested for all the warrants and additionally charged with being in possession of ammunition by a prohibited person and held on \$72,000.00 bail.

A man in Calpella has been arrested for creating mayhem. The Sheriff's office reports 37 year old Jose Villela from Kelseyville was stopped for a vehicle code violation. It was found he had warrants for his arrest, and was on probation. The warrant was for Mayhem out of Lake County with Clear Lake Police. He was arrested and held on \$1,000,000.00 bail.

Lookout for a Tsunami warning. The communications test is next Wednesday at 11 am in De Norte, Humboldt and Mendocino Counties. The Sheriff's Dept. reports there will be emergency interruptions of TV and Radio programs and activation of NOAA Weather Radios and Outdoor Sirens. It's just a test and not a real emergency. You'll hear a voice telling you it's a test, like the old emergency broadcast interruptions. There will not be a cell phone alert though.

Assemblyman Jim Wood is speaking out after it came out that some Eureka Police officers had been sending vulgar and violent texts back and forth. Wood called the revelation in the Sacramento Bee newspaper despicable. The Police Chief has started an investigation and put the two officers on leave. The newspaper reports Sgt. Rodrigo Reyna-Sanchez and Officer Mark Meftah are accused, but it's not known how the paper got ahold of the texts which featured violence against their own teammates including women and their body parts. They also texted about homeless people, the mentally ill and imagined them being shot in the face. There's an independent investigation into the texts and the police chief says none of the texts reflect the values, they've been hammering home, to police with respect, calling it a slap in the face.

The first case of COVID19 reported one year ago this week in Mendocino County. The Public Health Dept. announced the case March 17th while the county had already been sheltering in place as the virus spread rampantly across the state of Calif. Schools and businesses closed to slow the spread. The first case the Public Health Officer at the time said, was not a shock and they'd been preparing for it since January, as many surrounding counties had already had cases and community spread. Since yesterday, there have been 46 deaths to the pandemic and almost 3,900 cases. Half in the Hispanic/Latino population, and 65% were in the Ukiah Valley.

The Mendocino County Sheriff's Office is getting inmates at the jail vaccinated. The jail's medical provider, NaphCare, is inoculating those who want the vaccine, it's not mandatory. They're getting the Johnson and Johnson single dose vaccine from the Mendocino County Public Health Dept. Extra nurses were brought in for the inoculations, then correctional and jail nursing staff monitored the inmates and an ambulance crew was there too in case of any allergic reactions. They reported 111 inmates and two staff members got their vaccinations.

A high speed chase in Middletown ends in the arrest of a man from Oakland. The Lake County Sheriff's Office reports trying to stop a black Mercedes sedan for a traffic violation when they noticed a silver Saab behind the Mercedes. The deputy activated his lights and the driver of the Saab slowed, but the Mercedes took off on Hwy. 175 towards Cobb at speeds reaching 100 MPH. The deputy went after the car, then stopped in Cobb. Then he saw the Saab again and stopped it. The driver Daniel Anton Bennett said he was not connected to the other car, but he was arrested for DUI of a controlled substance. Deputies found meth, and arrested him, but he was released from jail with no bail due to the pandemic. Later the Mercedes was seen again driving too fast, they tossed spike strips and Hannah Joy Mizner-Welch of Kelseyville was arrested. That was a stolen car. She was also texting the other guy who was arrested and found her with meth, heroin and pot, plus cash. She's arrested for various charges and held on \$35,000 bail.

The county's officially been in the Red Tier nearly a week, and with that secondary schools are allowed to start. As of today, the Ukiah School District allowed hybrid learning for older kids. The school district put out the word last night and thanked community members for their patience throughout the process.

Second year Mendocino College Nursing students helping to get the vaccine out, working with nurses from Adventist Health and other health care providers. They were involved with administering 1,000 COVID-19 vaccinations. Each nursing student got to inoculate 50-75 people themselves while being supervised by one of their instructors from the college. The Director of Nursing, Peggy Goebel says the students did a great job and they were complimented by staff from Adventist and by several community members who got their shots. The CDC says all students administering vaccinations have to complete their vaccinator course online and also get their vaccinations themselves at least two weeks before the clinic. They're continuing at Friday clinics through mid-May.

California corrections officials are being sued related to the spread of coronavirus inside San Quentin that ended up killing nearly 30 inmates and a correctional officer last year. Daniel Ruiz was in for four years for possessing drugs for sale and for being a felon in possession of a firearm, he died July 10th, but was set for release this fall. The lawsuit claims he had several underlying conditions including asthma, obesity, Hepatitis C and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease. The family says when they found out Ruiz had contracted the virus, he was already in an ICU for two weeks, on a ventilator, and near death. There's already a class action lawsuit regarding the same, another inmate who got sick and 1,400 others infected in a transfer to the prison. Ruiz lawyer says the transfer was "the worst prison public health debacle in California history".

A fire that started in a remote area of Anderson Marsh State Historic Park is being allowed to burn out on its own. The fire was started by State Parks staff to burn dry fuels on Slater Island near the ranch house. Lake County News reports the fire was 60 acres Tuesday night, but was up to 340 acres last night. They're working with Cal Fire and the Lake County Fire Protection District and say the fire is not a threat, calling it a good time of year to do a controlled burn and will eventually provide good protection from wildfire this fall. Parks staff say it has good containment all around it, and water on some sides of the fire.

State Sen. Mike McGuire is hosting another of his virtual town halls to discuss the pandemic. The meeting online tonight at 6:30 p.m. He's having guests, Dr. Timothy Brewer, from the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health and Geffen School of Medicine, and Lori Nezhura, deputy director of planning, preparedness and prevention from the State Office of Emergency Services. Nezhura is also co-chair of California's COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force.

The state is looking at ways to continue standardized testing looking for a waiver from the federal government so they can do localized selected tests. The State Board of Education has voted unanimously for a waiver from the U.S. Department of Education so schools can bypass the Smarter Balanced statewide assessments, that are required by state and federal education law. The federal government requires the yearly tests in reading and math for kids in 3rd to 8th grades as part of the Every Student Succeeds Act. Plus California has the Smarter Balanced tests every spring. Last year testing was paused due to the pandemic.

A \$10,000 grant has been awarded to the Robinson Rancheria of Pomo Indians for their local gardens as food work. The grant from the First Nations Development Institute of Longmont, Colorado for work on the "Good Earth Medicine" Garden Collective. The project is to help provide the tribe with healthy, nutritious, organic vegetables and fruit, and as support for food security. It's mostly for elders in the tribe who will run the program and in the fall they will have a harvest feast for the tribal community, with what they've grown in the garden.

There could be more changes coming in Mendocino County for the cannabis cultivation permitting program. The Planning Commission is meeting on the issue today, which you can catch on the county's YouTube channel. Mendo Voice reports it may mean a new permitting process from what 1,100 applicants already went through. Right now new growing businesses are capped at 10,000 square feet. But on Tuesday's Board of Supervisors agenda, they're considering a delay for any changes to the cultivation permit ordinance. The Planning Commission though is taking up public comment at their meeting today, then will send their report over to the supervisors. There are no new permit applications being accepted in the county.

03/19/21

Stormy oceans. The National Weather Service is warning we could get larger than 20 foot waves along the North Coast this morning. The warning says the biggest will be west to northwest bringing larger breaking waves. It's a reminder for anyone on the beach to be cautious and stay off rocks and jetties, or a good distance away from waves, and not to turn your back on the ocean. There have been sneaker waves or falls off rocks during these types of events, just this January, there was a death during a high wave event near Mendocino.

2 hour delays are expected on Last Chance Grade. Drivers are being warned from 9am to 6pm today there are just 30 min delays, but after those hours, there could be 2 hour waits as work continues on the 101 south of Crescent City. They're taking out some trees, and that could continue over the weekend.

#### **THE BELOW REPORT IS UPDATED BELOW**

A stabbing's been reported in Upper Lake and deputies are searching for the stabber. A victim ended up at Sutter Lakeside, then was taken to an out of county hospital. But they had non-life threatening injuries. Wednesday afternoon deputies got a call to a gas station where they say the suspects, Jerrica and Moses Reeves, both from Nice got into an argument with the victim, which turned physical with Jerrica assaulting the victim. They say then Moses jumped in. Soon after the victim ran inside the gas station with pain in his back. They say Moses Reeves stabbed the victim. Deputies say they don't know what the motive was. They've arrested Jerrica, but she was released due to the pandemic and Moses is still on the run.

Over a foot of snow blanketed the Brooktrails Township this winter. Fallen trees and other debris left behind was the topic of the Sherwood Firewise Communities special meeting last week. It was discussed it could take years to cleanup the mess left behind by 14 inches of the white, fluffy stuff. But it also took down trees and messed with public roads. The Mendocino County Department of Transportation has cleared the way on an easement sitting on both sides of the public roads, but apparently have to plan to take out downed trees. The County is reportedly working with Cal Fire and the Resource Conservation District to clear away a lot of dry fuel. They may also try for a grant to help pay for the work. And they discussed using volunteers like Team Rubicon, a disaster response group or Americorps to help.

A new scholarship has been announced by the Mendocino College Foundation. The Ricardo Stocker Scholarship comes through a donation from the Stocker family. Ricardo was a drug and alcohol counselor who offered bilingual counseling through Nuestra Casa, Anderson Valley School District, Project Sanctuary, the Youth Project and Neuesta Alianza; he was also a storyteller at Juvenile Hall and at elementary schools in the area too. He was part of the team at Mendocino College for more than two decades, and very popular with students.

It's official, we have a new state Attorney General as Xavier Becerra has joined the Biden Administration as the new Health and Human Services Secretary. Becerra tendered his resignation yesterday. He chose Matthew "Matt" Rodriguez to be his chief deputy attorney general and now he's the interim replacement until the Governor's nominee is confirmed. Becerra says it was an honor to serve the people of Calif. and he was proud of what his team accomplished. Chief Deputy Rodriguez was also interim chief deputy attorney general for former Attorney General Kamala Harris when she became a US Senator.

The Ukiah Police Dept. has honored several members of their staff for their outstanding achievements in 2020: including the Officer of the Year – Officer Chase Rigby, Dispatcher of the Year – Dispatcher Christopher Pittman, Life Saving Award – Officer Patrick Infante and Officer Alex Cowan. They had to cancel their yearly awards dinner again due to the pandemic but awarded the team with social distancing protocols in place. The department was also recognized last year by the Lexipol Connect program in the Gold level for consistently and effectively disseminating policies to officers, issuing timely policy updates as laws change, and ensuring officers are trained on policies.

Some state colleges and universities desperate to keep students in the state and not traveling, encouraging staycations with incentives. Spring Break is next week or the week after, there are some local events for students including outdoor hikes and scavenger hunts, so students stay local and don't hop on an airplane to faraway places. Because public health officials say it could mean another surge of Covid-19. The UC Berkeley Chancellor sent a message to students to do their part not to spread the virus. UC Santa Cruz is offering Grubhub gift cards to students who go on their on-campus scavenger hunt. UC Davis is giving students who stay in town \$75 gift cards. The CDC Director pleading with students not to gather in large groups and noted pictures circulating of revelers in Florida maskless enjoying spring break festivities.

The Gov. and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction have announced work with the California COVID-19 Testing Task Force and the California Department of Education to get 3 million rapid COVID-19 antigen tests to return to in person learning in the most disadvantaged school districts. Gov. Newsom and Superintendent Tony Thurmond announced the tests will go to the hardest hit regions of the state as there are more high-risk students and families there. Like households dealing with poverty, farmworkers and communities of color. Thurmond will help coordinate the effort. The tests are the size of a credit card and turn up results in 15 minutes.

Congressman Mike Thompson joining colleagues to change the current federal government payback in disasters to states and communities from 75% to 90% instead. Thompson, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Chair Peter De-Fazio of Oregon, Reps. Lucille Royball-Allard, Doug LaMalfa and Jimmy Panetta, all from California together introduced the Increase Federal Disaster Cost Share Act. It would be for any federally declared disasters in 2020. The representatives all represent districts hit hard by bad fires during the Coronavirus crisis, what Thompson calls a double crisis.

The Gov. has admitted he made mistakes while dealing with coronavirus last year. The Gov. says when reflecting back he realizes when communicating with counties and businesses and the public, they could have done a much better job informing the public exactly what the restrictions on activity meant. He says he also will be expanding the list of who's eligible to get the COVID19 vaccine in coming days as organizers for the recall against him say they have enough signatures to get the effort onto a ballot. The last Gov. to be recalled in the state was also a Democrat, Gray Davis. He was replaced by actor Arnold Schwarzenegger. Newsom was interviewed by the Associated Press yesterday ahead of the one year anniversary, today, of the state's stay home order, the first in the country after the pandemic took hold.

Lawmakers have voted to expand paid sick leave. Nearly 10 and a half million workers in the state could get up to two weeks paid time off if they have coronavirus symptoms, need to schedule a COVID-19 vaccine or care for someone, like their child, who is distance learning. If it becomes law, it would only go until the end of Sept. but would also be retroactive from January 1st. It's only for companies with at least 25 employees. Many can get reimbursed by the federal government thru things like payroll tax credits of up to \$500/day for every employee who takes the paid sick leave. It's for those who make \$60/hr or less.

A man wanted for the stabbing of another man at a gas station in Upper Lake's been caught. The Mendocino County Sheriff's Office reports on the arrest Moses Reeves for public intoxication to start with after the assault at the Pomo Pumps Gas Station Wednesday night. He was arrested by a Lake County Sheriff's Deputy and taken to jail and booked on Assault with a Deadly Weapon and Battery. A woman with him was arrested the night the stabbing was reported. A victim says Jerrica and Moses Reeves attacked him. When he ran into the gas station for help, he had pain in his back. He was flown to an out of county hospital with a stab wound, that was described as non-life threatening. Jerrica was released for her part in the incident due to the pandemic.

The Lake County Public Health Office has an update on vaccinations. The Public Health Officer, Dr. Gary Pace says community members have been through a really difficult time and is spreading the word about the benefit of getting immunized against the virus. Dr. Pace says nearly 30% of Lake County residents have gotten their first dose and more than 50% of the highest risk group, those 75 and older. He says the county is expecting more vaccines soon so more people will become eligible. And the more people who get vaccinated, the faster things can get back to normal times. There have been no infections at any of the three nursing homes since the vaccinations started. There have been no serious reactions to the vaccine reported in Lake County. And all of the approved vaccines (Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson are being administered and proven to be very

03/22/21 safe.

### **New Vaccination Clinic Schedule Starts Monday (3/22)**

Mondays 10am-4pm at Lakeport Auto Movies (52 Soda Bay Road, Lakeport)

Tuesdays-Thursdays 10am-4pm at Redbud Park (14655 Lakeshore Drive, Clearlake)

Visit <https://myturn.ca.gov> to Schedule Your Vaccination Appointment



The Mendocino County Deputy Health Officer and former fulltime Public Health Director, Dr. Noemi Doohan, has been appointed to be the co-chair of the Health Equity Committee for the California Conference of Local Health Officers (CCLHO). The Conference advises the state Department of Public Health and other state health agencies on all public health matters. Dr. Doohan says it's her goal to make sure health equity is strongly represented in state public health policies. The County's current Public Health Officer, Dr. Andy Coren congratulated Doohan and says she'll bring the needs and perspectives of rural counties forward, while continuing her long standing advocacy and support of health equity throughout California with an awareness for the diversity of needs of counties such as Mendocino.

Lake County public offices are reopening to the public. The Public Health Office working with the county is allowing more in person services starting today. The county is finally in the Red Tier after almost 4 months in purple. They ask that you try to call first before showing up to be sure you are sent to the right person. Plus the county is understaffed due to health and safety protocols, so appointments may be required to meet some customer needs. You should be able to get in touch with all county health departments Monday-Friday from 8am – 5pm. The in person hours start April 2nd. They ask that you follow public health guidelines by wearing a face covering, maintain six feet away from others, and sanitize hands frequently.

A woman reported missing from Fort Bragg last November is still gone. Police put out a statement over the weekend about the disappearance of Brittany Adkins last fall and say she had not been in contact with family members for about six months. They say she had been living in the Fort Bragg area for about a year and has no physical address or telephone number at the moment. She's been added to the Missing and Unidentified Persons System (MUPS). As of last week she was officially still considered missing. The police department reports interviewing all of Adkin's known family members, friends and associates. They say she may be with someone name Forest. She's described as White, 5' 9", 165 pounds with brown hair and green eyes. She has a tattoo of a fairy on her right back shoulder blade.

The Red Abalone Season has been canceled and won't be happening for some time. The Calif. Dept. of Fish and Wildlife closed the fishery until April of 2026 as red abalone stocks are impacted by large scale die offs due to the collapse of the bull kelp forest, the mollusk's main food source. The Fish and Game Commission extended the closure at their meeting in December for five more years after a closure in 2017 due to the red abalone populations dying from environmental stressors. They noted the die off from a heatwave and El Niño in 2014-2016, the local extinction of sunflower sea stars due to disease and a population expansion of purple sea urchins. That meant little kelp and more starvation and mass mortalities of abalone, which need kelp to survive.

It was unanimous, the Clearlake City Council voted to approve new five-year contracts and salary bumps for the Police Chief and City Manager. Chief Andrew White and Manager Alan Flora both got 7.5% salary increases and 3% increases each year starting in July of 2022. Flora has been the city manager for one year in a two year contract and will now make \$165,432. The Chief is making \$152,364 and has been the police chief for Clearlake nearly three years. Besides them, the finance director position is getting more money to bring in more applicants. The police chief has been the acting finance director parttime. So whoever gets the position permanently will make between \$93,000 to 119,000.

Vaccines are being administered across jails and prisons in the state without restrictions. So it doesn't matter the health or age of inmates under new guidelines by the Department of Public Health, updated last week.

Californians in any congregate residential setting can be vaccinated now, that includes jails, prisons, immigration detention centers, behavioral health facilities and homeless shelters. There have been severe outbreaks at times in the state prison system. Over 2,200 inmates at San Quentin got infected over the summer. 28 inmates died. Over 49,000 cases have been reported in California prisons. The state Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation says they're prioritizing vaccine distribution, offering it to all corrections employees and inmates. As of last Sunday, the 14th, over 26,000 corrections staff and almost 43,000 inmates had at least one dose.

All branches of the Lake County Library are opening. As of tomorrow you can go in for a browse, but wear a mask and remember to practice social distancing. There will be hand sanitizer throughout the building. The staff says they'll monitor the amount of people inside, so they don't go over capacity per the state's current public health guidelines. They're also asking people visiting to limit the amount of time they're inside so others can get in too. They're offering access to computers and internet with proper social distancing. The library has been open but for pickup, contactless service. And they reported digital checkouts were up over 60 percent compared to the year before.

[Learn more about the Lake County Library at http://library.lakecountyca.gov.](http://library.lakecountyca.gov)

The Lake County Board of Supervisors is getting back to hybrid, but in person participation from community members. Starting with tomorrow morning's meeting, since the county's currently in the Red Tier, the board will have Zoom and in person participation at board chambers in the Lake County Courthouse. They'll start off like every week with their weekly COVID19 update from the Public Health Officer, Dr. Gary Pace. Later in the meeting they'll get a report from the Lake County Tourism Improvement District on what they've been up to this past year and consider an agreement between the county and Visit Lake County, California for administration services at a cost of \$78,000.

The Governor's announced every adult in the state will be able to get vaccinated before summer. Gov. Newsom announced last Friday residents should be able to get their COVID-19 vaccination appointment before the end of next month, that is about when the federal government said all adult's getting vaccinated before May 1st. The Gov. made the announcement Friday along with more vaccine doses on the way. He says before the end of April, the state can totally get rid of the eligible tiers as everybody "across the spectrum" will be able to get it because of an exponential increase in the amount of supply. Right now those over 65, people with severe medical conditions and employees in certain sectors including food, education and health care are eligible.

The CDC put out new guidance on social distancing in classrooms and Calif. is following the advice. Children can sit 3 feet apart instead of 6 if they're not in a high risk area. The announcement came over the weekend. The desks also don't need plastic barriers. Students and teachers must wear masks. It's up to individual school districts what they do. Younger children in low risk communities can be 3 feet apart, but older kids, where spread has been more likely, still need to be six feet apart. But in Los Angeles, the school superintendent said it won't change how they reopen. The positivity rate across the state the last seven days has been under 2 percent.

The Lake County Board of Supervisors has unanimously agreed they will make "Promoting Tolerance, Respect, Equity and Inclusion" among their utmost priorities. Each supervisor read part of the new Proclamation, and affirmed they were committed to have Community Visioning Forums to come up with priorities in the categories to "build bridges, where there may be walls; foster tolerance, respect, understanding, equity and inclusion; promote non-violence and non-violent conflict resolution; focus resources on underlying causes and conditions that lead to inequitable resource and justice distribution; and find relevant solutions for any social injustices, as they may come to light. They're now coming up with listening sessions and are looking for four community members to help ensure they are inclusive and effective.

03/23/21

Two people in a travel trailer in Ukiah have been arrested for burglary. The Lake County Sheriff's Dept. say they got a call from Ukiah police about a possible burglary where someone was ripped off in Lucerne. Deputies reported to the travel trailer and found John Buckhanan and Rochelle Slaybaugh. Buckhanan had a felony arrest warrant from Stanislaus County for stolen property, so he was arrested. They also found stolen items in the travel trailer from a rip off in Stanislaus County. They found tools too, stolen from the victim in Ukiah. They also found a short-barreled shotgun, a handgun, and ammo for various guns, miscellaneous rifle parts, burglary tools, and Heroin and Meth. Buckhanan was charged with various crimes and Slaybaugh for being under the influence. More charges could be coming.

People are needed to sit on the 2021/2022 Mendocino County Civil Grand Jury. Applications are being accepted at Superior Court for consideration. The Presiding Judge of the Civil Grand Jury made the announcement. The application deadline is Friday, May 28th. Then the Grand Jury will be sworn in at the end of June. They will have 19 members for one year. They're tasked with investigating the operations of county, city and district governments; they provide civil oversight of local government departments and agencies; and respond to citizen complaints. They set their own agenda and meeting schedule. Jurors get paid \$25 per full panel meeting, \$10 per committee meeting and committee attendance at public meetings. They also get their mileage reimbursed at the current County of Mendocino rate.

A man in Fort Bragg has been arrested after reports of a teenager being raped. The Mendocino County Sheriff's Office reports getting a call last Tuesday from the mother of a 16 year-old girl who said her daughter was raped a day before. Apparently she was given booze, got too drunk to provide consent and was sexually assaulted. Police served a search warrant at a home and found Robert Devito Jr. and arrested him. He's charged with rape of an intoxicated person, oral copulation of an intoxicated person and statutory rape of a person with more than a 3-year age difference. He was being held on \$100,000.00 bail and the Sheriff's Office is asking anyone who may know anything about this incident or other incidents involving Devito to call them.

The Mendocino County Public Health Dept. reports over 40 percent of adults in the county have had at least one Covid-19 vaccine dose, and almost 20 percent have had both or are fully vaccinated. The Public Health Officer, Dr. Andy Coren said about a quarter of the eligible population has been given at least one shot. In Ukiah, officials say the vaccine supply is coming slower than expected, so they're focusing on the second dose in the county. The Johnson & Johnson vaccines have been given to inmates and will also be directed toward the homeless since it's just a single dose. So far there have been 3,920 cases and 46 deaths in Mendocino County.

There are currently 2 people in the hospital, one in the ICU.

Vaccine eligibility is starting to loosen in Calif. Some counties are filling appointments by allowing those 50 and older with or without underlying health conditions to get the vaccine. That's happening in Contra Costa County as of yesterday. And in Solano County where they had open appointments. But in the Bay Area the eligibility is restricted to residents 65 or older, people 16-64 with disabilities and certain health conditions and employees in certain industries, especially schools, in healthcare and public facing jobs. The last week there have been millions more who have become eligible, but there's still not enough supply to meet the demand.

The legislature is considering a new rule to end a distinction in language outlining spousal rape as opposed to other forms of sexual assault. Twin bills are being considered on the matter, that would go against what the law is now, that anyone convicted of spousal rape can be eligible for probation instead of prison or jail, and they might not have to register as a sex offender, but if it's rape of another kind, they would have to register. So spousal rape is not treated as harshly, according to the author of one of the bills, Assemblywoman Cristina Garcia who says, "Rape is rape, regardless of marital status." California is one of less than a dozen states still drawing a line between spousal rape and rape.

There are issues once again with the state's unemployment benefits department. The Employment Development Dept.'s website reports "intermittent issues" which has meant it's taking longer to certify those applying and others to continue to get their benefits. Those who get benefits have to sign in every couple of weeks. On Sunday, there were problems logging in. The agency reports anyone unable to certify were told to "check back a little later." But they reported other areas of the website worked fine.

Former Democratic Governor Gray Davis who was recalled is speaking out about Gov. Gavin Newsom and the intended recall against him. Davis interviewed by New York Magazine said there was a communication problem when he was recalled regarding the electricity crisis at the turn of the millennium which led to Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger unseating him. He says voters should forgive Newsom for his French Laundry dinner debacle, saying you get one pass. And that Newsom fessed up immediately and admitted his error in judgment. There are already 3 challengers to Newsom if the recall gets onto a ballot. He's started a PAC to raise money to fight it.

Museums in Lake County are reopening after being closed for months due to public health restrictions related to the pandemic. So the Historic Courthouse Museum in Lakeport, the Schoolhouse Museum in Lower Lake and the Gibson Museum in Middletown are all reopening to the public today. They will of course have public safety guidelines in place like masks needing to be worn all the time and social distancing required. The museums closed when the county entered the purple tier. But now that the county moved to the red tier, various businesses were able to reopen. With that the museums will be open weekends, from Thursday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Call boxes are being renovated in Lake County. Lake Co News reports the Lake Area Planning Council has approved upgrades. They're the local entity that maintains the county's call boxes. Most apparently work thru cellular service, but the service provider has changed its technology from 3G to 4G. And since the insides of the callboxes can only work with 3G, the systems need upgrading or they may not work at all. So they're working with the cell provider and technicians to make it happen. There's a short supply of the new radios though, so it's taking a minute for the upgrades to happen. They'll be monitoring for any out of service call boxes, and ask the public to report them too.

The Zogg Fire that broke out in Shasta County last year has been officially traced back to a tree hit by Pacific Gas and Electric Co. equipment. The fire started last Sept. 27th and blackened more than 56,300 acres, burned over 200 structures and killed four people. The fire burned in both Shasta and Tehama counties. Cal Fire says their investigation showed a pine tree contacted electrical distribution lines owned and operated by PG&E. The utility company has issued a statement saying it's tragic and they recognize, "nothing can heal the hearts of those who have lost so much". They also say they have not seen the report and look forward to reviewing it. The company also says they filed an Electric Incident Report with the California Public Utilities Commission a couple weeks after the fire burned. The Cal Fire report has been sent to the Shasta County District Attorney's Office.

A case of Deja vu turned out to be nothing. Several dozen heavily armed police officers responded to the Veterans Home of California in Yountville after a report of a possible active shooter. But there were no shots fired, nor a suspected shooting or gun anywhere on the complex. It all happened yesterday, a day after a mass shooting in Boulder, CO and a week after another in Atlanta. There was also a mass shooting at the Yountville home in 2018 where three staff members were killed. The campus is a nonprofit residential treatment center for veterans who have been traumatized. The mayor of the town says thankfully, nobody was hurt, after reports that a woman was on campus with a long gun. The campus went on lockdown for about 4 hours until they had the all clear.

03/24/21

A reminder of a tsunami warning test along the coast. This morning at 11 and for the next hour after there will be sirens sounded throughout Del Norte, Humboldt, and Mendocino counties. There will be radio, TV and weather station alerts. They are testing to make sure all are in working order. There is nothing to do, and nobody call. Also a reminder, that it's a test, and you do not need to evacuate your home or business.

Levels in both Lake Mendocino and Lake Pillsbury are very low for this time of year and there's really no rain in the forecast in coming days. Earlier this month there was also a reduced water supply alert for the Russian River Flood Control and Water Conservation Improvement District. They send water to several areas including Willow, Millview, Redwood Valley, and Calpella. Yesterday the California Water Resources Board released a "dry year letter". In other words, the continued dry conditions may threaten water supplies, impair critical habitat, reduce recreational opportunities, and create uncertainty for all water users.

A request for proposals is being offered to farmers in Mendocino County for a two year industrial hemp cultivation pilot program. The deadline to apply is this Friday. The county can have five applicants for the program, and so far, as of yesterday, there were zero who even applied to be part of the program. The county's Agriculture Department had a representative at a recent Board of Supervisors meeting. Then Supervisors unanimously agreed to proceed. So if they end up getting applicants, they'll be part of a 2 year program who registers with the state department of Food & Agriculture who have to pay a \$900 registration fee, and possibly other related fees. They need a minimum of a 10th of an acre, but they could scale up during the program.

After a year of having their physical doors closed, the Willits Library is reopening. It will be a phased-in approach starting Monday. It comes because the county has finally hit the Red Tier in California's Blueprint to Reopen the Economy. Staffers are still working on the hours and expect to announce that soon. They will only open with 25% capacity or about 12 people at one time two afternoons a week. Photocopiers and printers are open to the public and computers and bathrooms are not available so folks don't hang out too long. There will be installed air purifiers, air filters in the HVAC system and hand sanitizer, and you must wear a mask inside at all times.

The Lake County Public Health officer has reported to the regular Board of Supervisors meeting on the vaccine rollout. Dr. Gary Pace says so far, so good and told Supervisors the state was going to help, by sending personnel to staff vaccination clinics. It was the first Supervisors meeting in some time with members of the public allowed in person. It's because the county's now in the Red Tier. Some were still on Zoom, as was one supervisor. Dr. Pace says case numbers of COVID19 continue going down. The positivity rate is now at 1.7 percent, the lowest since the start of the pandemic.

A North Coast legislator is a new dad. Senator Mike McGuire, who covers Lake, Trinity and Mendocino Counties, and his wife, have brought their first child into the world. On Sunday, McGuire's wife Erika gave birth to a baby boy. McGuire posted on Facebook that his son was healthy, happy and nursing like a champ. He also said they're sleep deprived. McGuire represents the Second Senate District.

Four people are needed by Lake County to be on the new committee just created to plan community visioning forums to promote tolerance, respect, equity and inclusion. It comes after the Board of Supervisors, who each read a provision from the proclamation that their utmost priority would be to promote tolerance, respect, equity and inclusion. The vote was unanimous. The board is working on listening sessions for the public now. The four volunteers will be tasked with making sure the forums are inclusive and effective.

Looking ahead to a plan for affordable housing in Calif. as state lawmakers work on ways to help those at risk of homelessness, especially now during the pandemic. The state is in need of nearly 2 million new housing units within 4 years, but the Dept. of Housing and Community Development says so far there are only about 80,000 being built each year as the amount of shelterless individuals in the state was at over 161,000 before COVID-19. Housing Calif. is working on a 10-year strategy which they're releasing to the public tomorrow, saying it goes beyond bills in the Legislature, and would help remove any obstacles to get construction going in places with little or no union labor.

The Mendocino County Public Health Officer says there's no evidence, so far, of any known Covid-19 variants locally, but there have only been two tests conducted. The Daily Journal reports Dr. Andy Coren told the Board of Supervisors yesterday that the county cannot yet automatically have tests for variants, that they need to be manually sent with that intention. He also told Supervisors since schools are reopening, there's been a slight increase in new cases, that were connected to those associated with schools, both teachers and students. As far as the vaccine goes, Dr. Coren says, there's not enough for first doses this week, so they're only doing second doses at Adventist Health Ukiah Valley after they secured doses from a sister hospital in (Los Angeles) last week for the clinic.

A man from Ukiah's been killed in a solo car crash on Hwy 23. The CHP reports the man was in a Mazda Miata convertible on the highway Sunday when he went over the double yellow lines for some unknown reason near Mile Marker 12.75, then traveled back into his lane, then left the road, hit a dirt embankment and overturned, landing on its roof. He's been identified as 80 year old Herbert Elmore Henrickson of Ukiah. The CHP reports they're still investigating, and said it was unclear whether drugs or alcohol were involved.

After last year's historic August Complex Fire, Mendocino National Forest staff is having a town hall on their current forest land management strategy. The fire was started by lightning and burned an astounding 1,032,648 acres from Aug. 16 through Nov. 12 across several counties. It's the first Gigafire the state has ever had, the largest in California's recorded history. Inside the Mendocino National Forest, the fire burned more than 612,000 of the forest's 913,300 acres. Forestry workers have a phased approach to help the forest land recover, including taking out dead trees, thinning concentrations of more dead trees so there are no other severe wildfires, replant, then assess watersheds for further restoration.

The meeting will be available online next Thursday from 4-6pm through Micro

Meeting attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions about the forest'

Drought warning for the west has both state and federal officials sending warnings about California's summer water supply. The warnings for farmers and others from the Department of Water Resources. The agency changed its forecast for water deliveries to both cities and farms that are part of the State Water Project that there will only be a 5% allocation of contracted supplies. That's down from the 10% forecasted in December. Water for farmers in the Central Valley Project mostly comes from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. They said because of current hydrological conditions, the 5% water allocation that had been promised south of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta is no longer available. The Gov. has not officially declared a drought, but some state agencies are said to be preparing.

03/25/21

Visitors are being allowed once again at California state prisons after a year without. Limited visits begin again on April 10th after the virus killed over 215 inmates and 26 corrections dept. employees. Public health restrictions will be in place like temperature taking, symptom screening, virus testing, physical distancing, face masks, and limits on how many visitors can come into facilities and how long they can be there. It'll be up to individual prisons to decide if there will be visits throughout the facility, or just sections. And opening dates may vary depending on virus activity. The worst outbreak was at San Quentin which has spurred a lawsuit after a transfer of inmates, not necessarily all tested, who went to the prison and infected others, 25 inmates and one correction officer died there.

Counties hear every Tuesday if they get to move ahead in the Blueprint to Reopen the Economy in California. The Department of Public Health has confirmed that Trinity County will enter the Orange Tier. That means restaurants are opened indoors with 50% capacity or 200 people, whichever is less, wineries and tasting rooms at 25% or 100 people, whichever is less, bars, breweries, and distilleries are still only outdoors, retail is indoors at full capacity, churches and other places of worship, indoors at 50% or 200 people, whichever is fewer, Hotels, Resorts, Lodging Entities are open with certain modifications, gyms at 25% capacity, indoor pools can reopen, but hot tubs, saunas, and steam rooms have to stay closed.

It was only a test, but half of the Tsunami Warning Test notifications didn't work in one county. Yesterday 12 sirens were supposed to go off, only six did in Humboldt County. A spokesperson for the Sheriff's Office says they're activated remotely, so they need to make sure they function if they're turned on manually, and if not, they may have a motor or electricity issue. Apparently, they've not had a consistent funding source for maintenance of the sirens. Mendocino and Trinity counties also ran the warning system tests yesterday. No word so far if there were any glitches in either of those counties.

A healthy real estate market is one result of the COVID19 pandemic in Lake County. Lake Co News reports it's a sellers' market. Homes pretty much selling right away and close to what the sales price is pegged at. The news site reports there were less days on the market for the homes for sale last month. There were 120 homes for sale, down nearly 60% from 2020. The median price for single family home in Lake County is \$327,000, up almost 40% from last year. And the news site reports the median amount of days homes sit on the market, was just over one month. But in Kelseyville, almost 2 months and in Clearlake only 2 weeks. And data showed homes in all cities went for pretty close to their selling price.

The federal government's prescription drug take back program is happening again in Lakeport. The Police Dept. taking part this year in the Drug Enforcement Administration's annual National Prescription Drug Take Back Day. It's happening Saturday, April 24th between 10 and 2 at the police station. They'll have a drop off site there. They require those turning drugs in to adhere to pandemic guidelines, by wearing a facial covering and making sure to physically distance from others. You will also have to stay inside your car. They'll accept all over-the-counter or prescription meds that are in pill, tablet or capsule form. They have to be outside of their containers in plastic baggies though. They will also collect vape pens or other e-cigarettes, but the batteries need to be removed. They're not accepting any illegal drugs, needles, inhalers and aerosol cans.

Officers in the Ukiah Police Department won honors for the last year including a pair who helped a man who collapsed in a grocery store parking lot. The Daily Journal reports officers Alex Cowan and Patrick Infante were at the Lucky supermarket last July in the 500 block of East Perkins Street for reports of the man down. Paramedics were called to the scene by the two officers who found the man with a "weak pulse, shallow breathing and unresponsive." The two officers used an automated external defibrillator on him. He was then taken to a hospital. Apparently, he did have some sort of heart condition. Chase Rigby was Officer of the Year as well for his daily duties within the department, working to remove illegal drugs from the street and find stolen vehicles too.



There's been loads of reports throughout Northern Calif. of overdoses from methamphetamine pills laced with Fentanyl. According to the Mendocino County Public Health Officer, Fentanyl can take many forms, as a pill, in powder or liquid and is highly addictive. Dr. Coren says even a small dose can easily be fatal. So the Mendocino County Public Health and Mendocino County Behavioral Health & Recovery Services (BHRS), Substance Use Disorders Treatment (SUDT) are working to help residents addicted to opioids and remind them of the dangers of substance use. The county reminds it has resources to help anyone wanting it. They can call 707-472-2624. Also if you think you may have ingested the substance, please reach out immediately to your local emergency room, or call 911. And if you have some, to avoid physical contact with the substance and please contact your local law enforcement.

The Lake County Public Health Officer says the demand for coronavirus vaccines is waning. Dr. Gary Pace at the Board of Supervisors regular meeting Tuesday saying they're not filling all available vaccine appointments. He says now that we're using the state's website to find an appointment, it may be due to that, because it's been confusing switching to the state's MyTurn vaccination appointment system. As of this week, those over 50 years old are eligible, but there were technical issues Tuesday causing some to not be able to get an appointment. He did say however that the supply is improving and the county should do outreach to those who may be hesitant to get the vaccine.

A bill has been introduced in the Calif. Legislature after the mass shootings a week apart in Colorado and Georgia. Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel has introduced the measure requiring law enforcement to use guns manufactured with microstamping technology showing a unique mark on bullet casings linking them to a specific firearm. The bill, if it passes, would follow another from 14 years ago requiring all new semiautomatic pistols be made with that microstamping technology. But it's apparently not taken seriously because there have been no new handgun models since then.

A man stopped for a traffic violation in Ukiah has been arrested on drug charges and resisting arrest. The Sheriff's Dept. reports a deputy pulled Lewis Dishman over after midnight last Sunday morning and when Dishman opened the center console to get his ID, the deputy saw meth pipe and told the guy to get out of the car and he was being arrested. The man became agitated, but was handcuffed and when the deputy walked Dishman to his patrol vehicle, he says he shoulder checked him and tried getting away. He was taken down on the ground and backup officers showed up to help.

Dishman was arrested finally for possession of drug paraphernalia, violation of probation, and resisting or threatening an officer and held on \$15,000.00 bail.

03/26/21

A man from Willits pulled over for a traffic stop by a deputy has been arrested for being in a stolen car. Deputies say, not only that, but Martin Briggs also first took the deputy on a chase. With lights turning and sirens blaring, Briggs drove recklessly, even crossing into the opposing lane of traffic as the deputy pursued him. He crashed head on into an overpass support pillar and was arrested for having the stolen vehicle, evading a peace officer with reckless driving, and evading a peace officer by driving on the wrong side of the highway. Because of the pandemic emergency court order though, his bail was set at zero and he was released.

A man from Covelo has been arrested for a warrant. A deputy stopped Augustine Frease and his passenger, Kathy Genet. They found Frease was also on Mendocino County Post Release Community Supervision probation (PRCS) so he was arrested for the warrant. The deputy then searched the car and found drugs attached to Frease's keys, a meth pipe in a pocket on the driver's side door and a meth pipe in a bag on the front passenger floorboard. Also, on Genet, the same. They found a meth pipe on her and drugs in her possession. Frease was taken to jail and held on \$25,000 bail, but Genet was released with a ticket to appear in court.

The Mendocino County Public Health Officer reports the county has identified different strains of coronavirus in samples taken last month. The random samples were specifically for variant testing, and Dr. Coren of the office, says they found 4 different strains. Just Wednesday, the public health office was alerted they found the B.1.4.7 (West Coast Variant), B.1.4.9 (West Coast Variant) and the B.1.2 category, which are U.S. variants. The West Coast variants have shown to have a 20% higher transmission rate and were a little more resistant to antibody therapies, which Coren says should be of "significant concern for Mendocino County residents". He says scientists are still trying to figure out if the variants are resistant to the vaccine though. He reminds to keep up with the public safety guidelines, of continuing to wear a mask, social distancing and good hand hygiene.

Some impacted by wildfires in Calif. are getting fresh help. ReCoverCA is offering help to wildfire survivors from the 2017 and 2018 disasters. With that, the California Department of Housing and Community Development is doing a 2018 Disaster Housing Assistance Survey for victims of the 2018 wildfires and will replace a single family or manufactured home for the 2017 or 2018 qualifying disasters. Homes that were either destroyed or damaged in the 2017 firestorm could bring \$150,000 to the victim to build and for the 2018 disasters, up to \$200,000. They say those in the low to moderate income category will get priority.

#### [To see if you qualify to participate in the ReCoverCA Owner-Occupied Housing](#)

It won't be long until anyone who wants a vaccine in California can get one. Next week, those over 50 will be eligible, then over the age of 16 two weeks later. The Governor made the announcement yesterday that will mean no rules or limitations for eligibility as the state starts to ramp up distribution. The state of Calif. is expecting 2.5 million doses a week next month, and 3 million a week towards the later part of April. Right now, we're at about 1.8 million doses a week. So far the state says, they've administered more than 15 million coronavirus vaccines. And that they say has led to less infections in recent weeks after a winter surge, and another last summer.

A new rule could change the way courts decide bail. The state Supreme Court has ruled Thursday that judges need to decide if a suspect is able to pay bail, before they set it. That could mean those without shelter or work would just be released until their trial date. They can however seek electronic monitoring, regular check-ins with authorities or make sure the suspect stays in a shelter or goes thru drug and alcohol treatment. But the court said if a financial condition is necessary a court has to consider the ability of the person who was arrested to pay the stated amount of bail. But to protect the community, a suspect cannot be released, but the court would have to provide "clear and convincing evidence that no condition short of detention could suffice."

Planned upgrades for sidewalks in Ukiah have been approved for safety reasons. The Daily Journal reports after the city council had a presentation from the associate director of the Ukiah Valley Association of Habilitation/Mayacama Industries, who help those with various disabilities, changes needed to be made. She said there had been some close calls at the crosswalk in the 900 block of South Dora St. near St. Mary of the Angels Catholic School where cars almost hit people. So at the council meeting last week they agreed to upgrade sidewalks and put in speed reducers. There will be added curb extensions on both sides of the cross walk, median speed reducers and improved crosswalk striping for about \$45,000.

Several bills have been introduced by state lawmakers regarding hate crimes, but CalMatters reports many have died in committees. A new study shows after some highly visible hate crimes against Asian Americans, lawmakers are bringing some of those old bills back again even though they had been rejected in the past. CalMatters reports that Democratic Assemblymember David Chiu of San Francisco has reintroduced his bill from 4 years ago saying he believe there was not the sense of urgency then that there is now. His bill would require the state attorney general to have a toll-free number so hate crimes could be reported. He says the mass murder that happened two weeks ago in Atlanta was a wakeup call for “what those in the Asian American community have been experiencing for quite some time.”

#### [Hope Rising says they're strengthening their programs to fight opioid drug ab](#)

Some cattle on the road made a mess of things on the 101 near Hopland. Mendo Fever reports hearing on the scanner yesterday mid-morning several law enforcement agencies were on the scene where a cattle transport truck reportedly lost several animals. One of them died and two ran loose. Responding officers said there were three cows over a one mile stretch of the highway near mile-marker 3.97 in the northbound lane near Frog Woman Rock.

An executive order meant to help victims of wildfires against price gouging has been announced by the governor's office. Governor Newsom issued the order yesterday that he says will further help communities recover from fires that burned across Calif. last year. The order lengthens the amount of time businesses can raise fees for those who may have been impacted by various wildfires in August and September 2020. The order calls it the most destructive wildfire season in California history where nearly 10,000 fires scorched over 4.25 million acres of land and destroyed or damaged more than 10,000 structures, including more than 5,000 homes. So the order says the price gouging protections put in place last September are extended.

CalFire's Mendocino Unit is planning a big, prescribed burn near Yorkville and the Upper Rancheria Creek in the southeastern portion of Mendocino County. It's also outside Cloverdale so aircraft and smoke will be visible across a large swath of land. It's happening all next week, Monday thru the following, Monday, March 29th to April 5th from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. each day, weather and air quality conditions permitting. The burn will be conducted under very tight restrictions for the personal safety of firefighters and area residents. They say if it appears at all it cannot be conducted in a safe manner, due to high winds or local fire activity, the burn will be cancelled. The goal is to reintroduce fire as a natural element of the ecosystem and improve wildlife habitat, plus forest thinning.

A man is in Mendocino County Jail facing arson charges after Fort Bragg Police say he started three fires over the weekend. It started with a report of a structure fire in the 300 block of North Harbor Drive Friday morning that was determined to be arson. Then Friday evening, an officer responded to a report of a prowler in the 300 block of Perkins street, where they chased a man along the railroad tracks near Rose Memorial Cemetery. That officer discovered a fresh brush fire before catching the suspect. Police say they then discovered 47-year-old Robert Fielden on surveillance video taken at the home on Perkins showing him attempting to set a third fire there. When he was arrested, officers found he had butane torches, methamphetamine, and drug paraphernalia on him. Fort Bragg Police ask that you check your surveillance video between 7:30 to 9:00 am Friday morning to help identify Fielden's location. You can find video of him on their Facebook page.

03/29/21

Lake County is celebrating a milestone. At least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine has been distributed to one third of residents age 16 and older. Vaccine eligibility will start to extend this week with people age 50 and older able to receive the shot starting Thursday. All who are 16 and older will become eligible on April 15.

Ukiah Unified School District begins its Spring Break today and students don't have to report back to class until next Tuesday. The district is holding a special COVID-19 testing clinic on Monday, April 5 for those who traveled over the break or who gathered in groups. It will be open from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the Pomolita Middle School Library.

The Mendocino County District Attorney history series continues with George Abram Sturtevant. He served as the county's 13th D.A. Before becoming a San Francisco Superior Court Judge, Sturtevant served two terms as D.A. In the 1890s. His family has a road named after them in the Hopland area and a home he built still stands to this day on the grounds of Dan Fetzer's Jeriko Estate Winery north of Hopland.

Two people are dead after a giant redwood tree fell on top of their car in Northern Calif. The CHP reports the 175-foot-tall redwood fell on Jessica and Jake Woodruff's car while the two were on a road trip along the California coast. It happened last Thursday in Del Norte on Highway 199 outside Crescent City. The CHP reports the couple, celebrating Jennifer's 45th birthday were driving along part of the highway in a very forested area near Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park. A GoFundMe was started for the couple's five children. There was about \$80,000 raised as of yesterday.

03/30/21

The 2 U.S. senators and nearly two-dozen congressional representatives for Calif. are asking the Agriculture and Interior departments to change the state to a year round firefighting force due to the amount of fires, how long they last, when they start, and when they end. Saying there are no longer traditional fire seasons in the state so they want to reclassify more seasonal federal firefighter positions as permanent. A letter was sent to the two new Biden administration officials, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and Interior Secretary Deb Haaland signed by Sens. Dianne Feinstein and Alex Padilla and 21 members of Congress which came after another devastating wildfire season last year in Calif.

#### [Forest land management strategy top of mind for Mendocino National Forest](#)

A new woodchipper will help with fuel reduction and hazardous tree removal in Mendocino County. An announcement of the purchase by the County, Mendocino County Resource Conservation District, Mendocino County Fire Safe Council, and the Redwood Valley-Calpella Fire Department. The purchase was made through a Hazardous Tree Removal grant provided by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection with California Climate Investments funding. The County was able to win the grant in partnership with the Resource Conservation District and Fire Safe Council. The chipper will be used for fuel reduction mostly in Redwood Valley and supporting other projects in other parts of the County when not needed in Redwood Valley.

A massive controlled burn is planned by CalFire in Mendocino County. The burn is planned throughout the week until next Monday south of Yorkville, near Upper Rancheria Creek in the southeastern section of Mendocino County, south of Highway 128, and north of Cloverdale. As a reminder, you may see aircraft and smoke in the area. Weather permitting they'll be working as part of the Vegetation Management Program to reintroduce fire as a natural element of the ecosystem.

[For prescribed burning notifications, residents are encouraged to follow the C](#)  
<https://www.facebook.com/CALFIREMEU/>.

Money is coming to some Lake County Indian Tribes from the federal government to fight coronavirus. Lake Co News reports the Indian Housing Block Grant funding comes from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. \$450 million is going to tribes across the country and \$31 million will go to California tribes. It will go to help tribes with affordable housing and to protect the safety and health of tribal members and communities. These types of grants are generally used for low-income American Indian and Alaska Native families. It's for use for housing development, operation and maintenance, modernization of existing housing, housing services to eligible families and individuals, housing management services, crime prevention and safety activities and more. The news site reports all 7 of Lake County's tribes will get funds.

More schools are beginning to reopen in Lake County now that they've entered the red tier in the state's COVID-19 Blueprint for a Safer Economy. Only two new school districts had opened in January, Upper Lake and Lucerne Elementary which are all in hybrid learning. The Lake County Office of Education reported schools were open since last August for in-person classes. Same with the Lake County International Charter School. Konocti Unified opened for kindergarten through sixth grade Feb. 22nd and seventh through 12th just came back March 22nd, a month later. Kelseyville's kindergarten through fifth graders returned March 8, and sixth through 12th last Monday. Lakeport reopened March 8 with younger kids, phasing in the older students and the same for Middletown schools which started phased reopening at the beginning of March.

Discrimination, hate crimes, and micro-aggressions after COVID-19 surfaced have been directed at Asian Americans and Mendocino College has put out a statement to denounce it all. The college says since the outbreak of the virus in Wuhan, China, the infection has grown and it's not due to ethnicity. The statement goes on to say the World Health Organization has cautioned against using geographic descriptors because they can fuel ethnic discrimination. The virus has been referred to as the "Chinese virus," and "Kung-Flu" which the college says is inaccurate and stigmatizing, can incite fear and xenophobia, and may put Asian Americans at risk of retaliation. The college joining cities, counties, and states across the country affirming its commitment to the safety and well-being of Asian Americans and to fight hate crimes targeting Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

Congressman Mike Thompson has announced Crystal Martin and Carol Huchingson are the 2020 and 2021 Women of the Year in Lake County.

Thompson honors women from his Congressional District annually who he finds have made exceptional contributions to the community. This year Thompson announced both 2020 and 2021 women of the year because last year's celebration was cancelled due to the pandemic. Crystal Martin, Thompson says "is a dedicated and tireless advocate for justice". She is the Lake County District Attorney's Victim-Witness Program Administrator and the 2020 Woman of the Year. For this year, he announced Lake County's Administrative Officer, Carol Huchingson, who he called "a bedrock of Lake County".

Congressman Mike Thompson has had another of his online meetups for constituents regarding the pandemic and the economy. His latest, was to cover the latest stimulus package. This, the first under the Biden Administration, the American Rescue Plan. He was joined by the Lake County Public Health Officer, Dr. Gary Pace; along with other officials and business owners throughout the 5th Congressional District. He talked about what was in the plan, including money to distribute vaccinations, direct payments to individuals and families, money for schools, states and cities and businesses. Dr. Pace says there will still be surges of the virus, but deaths and severe illness won't happen the same way because the most vulnerable people are now vaccinated and protected. Pace says "the more people we get covered the more we're going to be able to get back to normal, and the less suffering there's going to be."

The Ukiah Library is reopening. Starting today after a year of curbside service, in person service reopens. It's this afternoon from 1 to 5, same with Thursday. For the last year, there have been virtual programs online, curbside pickup of books and other library materials by appointment, e-books, audiobooks, films and music recordings available 24/7 for free to county residents with a library card. The reopened Library thanks to the county entering the red tier in California's Blueprint to Reopen the Economy. You may have to wait in line to get in due to social distancing. Facial coverings are required, and there will be no seating or available restrooms for now. Also, no shared computer access.

Five more vaccination clinics are planned in the county. Mendocino County Public Health has set the clinics up this week, today is the Pfizer second dose event at the Ukiah Fairgrounds from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. for those who got their first dose March 9th and had their second-dose appointment set at that time. Tomorrow it's the Moderna event at the Fairgrounds from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. You are eligible if you got your first dose March 3rd. Again on Thursday for Pfizer from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. for those who got their first dose March 11th or 13th. And for Moderna again, but at the "The Woods" in Little River Thursday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. for those who got the first dose March 4th. Friday again for Pfizer second dose at the Caspar Community Center from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. for those inoculated March 12th.

A man from Clearlake has been arrested in Willits after being found with drugs while having a warrant out for his arrest. The Mendocino County Sheriff's Office id'd Joseph Fitzgerald and they knew the woman he was with, Allison Strout from previous contacts. Fitzgerald was arrested as they found about 5 grams of suspected heroin in two containers, meth in a backpack and a scale. Strout was on formal probation with a search term and found to have a warrant for her arrest from Humboldt County. They found 2 grams of suspected meth on her, two used glass pipes, a measuring spoon with a black/brown substance in the spoon and burn marks on bottom of the spoon. Also 20 small unused clear plastic baggies and two cell phones. The two were arrested for various crimes including possession of a controlled substance for sale and conspiracy to commit a felony. Fitzgerald was booked on \$27,500.00 bail, but Strout was released due to the pandemic.

A man from Nice has been arrested for driving erratically in Ukiah. Deputies say Mark Nielson was arrested last Friday after he suddenly pulled to the side of the road. While speaking to him, the deputy found the car had been stolen from Lake County. He was arrested for being in possession of a stolen vehicle and while being searched three blue tablets were found on him. They're commonly referred to as "M30" or "Fetty" and contain Fentanyl. "M30" pills, and Fentanyl in other forms, have been identified as the cause of many drug overdose medical emergencies and deaths throughout Mendocino County. He's booked into jail for possessing a stolen vehicle and possession of a controlled narcotic. Due to the pandemic he was released with a promise to appear in court at a later date.

A man has died after falling off a cliff near Albion. The Mendocino County Sheriff Office reports an elderly man slipped and fell about 60 feet into the ocean and died near the small community on the Mendocino coast. He was apparently visiting from out of state with family where they were staying in a rental on the bluff. Dispatchers sent rescuers yesterday afternoon around 4,

03/31/21 ambulance.

The Willits City Council has voted to pull out a Giant, dying Sequoia in Babcock Park. The council voted unanimously to fell the tree after it started to show signs of "failing health and distress" about two and a half years ago. A forester and arborist came out and examined the tree and a report was given to the council on the findings. The report said the tree, native to the Central Valley was sitting in saturated soil and had been compacted into the earth from activity at the park. He also said there were other trees looking similarly distressed at the park. The city surveyed residents on social media and the city website and got over 52% wanted the tree to be removed and only 11% against it. So more trees will be planted in its place.

It's been a while since we've had an update on Measure B since the Board of Supervisors has been dealing with the pandemic for the last year. The board heard an update on the Crisis Residential Treatment Facility being built on South Orchard Avenue next to the Ukiah Post Office. There will also be a Mobile Crisis and Response Team the county is working with the Sheriff's Office and the Ukiah Police Department on. They've hired a staff member for the team who will work with the Sheriff's office. They will also offer a Crisis Assessment and Psychiatric Hospitalization Aftercare Program through Redwood Community Services and a Psychiatric Health Facility. There will be 16-beds for 24/7 services, but there's no physical facility for that yet.

Three people have been killed in a fire at a home in Clearlake Oaks. The Lake County sheriff's office reports the fire in the Clear Lake Keys in a two story house where they believe two men, and woman possibly from the same family died. The fire yesterday morning gutted the home. North Shore Fire is investigating where the ignition point was and how it started. They have not officially identified the bodies, as they have to await a forensic examination for an official identification. The Sheriff's office is asking anyone who may have information to call them or the Northshore Fire Protection District.

Health officials in Sonoma County voicing concern as thousands of students return to in person learning. The Press Democrat reports officials are asking residents to be cautious and vigilant with health and safety protocols. Some area private schools have been back to face to face learning for months, but public schools had been closed as the county sat in the purple tier in California's Blueprint to Reopen the Economy. The newspaper reports almost 20,000 students at 30 different schools are either coming back to in person by the end of this week, or before April 15th. Santa Rosa schools are the largest in the county and open to thousands of kids tomorrow. The county's head of vaccines says other school systems have pulled it off, and they're hoping people understand how important the health measures are to keep case rates low.



### The Lake County Public Health Officer has sent out a notice to encourage all

A man from Ukiah's been arrested after a parole search at his home turns up some marijuana and weapons. Last Friday Sheriff's deputies conducted a warrant service and parole search at Larry Wolfe Jr's house because there was a warrant for his arrest for a Parole violation. When they knocked, they say they could see him inside, but he wouldn't answer the door. He finally surrendered and they went inside, finding a commercial quantity of processed cannabis packaged for sale. They say he also had a semi-automatic 9mm pistol with a loaded magazine and a collapsible, 9mm assault rifle, and a loaded high capacity 9mm magazine. That was concealed in a laptop computer case where there was a bunch of ammo too. So the guy was arrested on several charges including having ammunition as a prohibited person, unlawful possession of an assault weapon and possessing cannabis for sale. He was held on \$110,000.00 bail.

A man from Covelo's been arrested after a fight with the mother of his child. Witnesses told deputies 21 year old Oscar Martinez was in a relationship with the 27 year old woman who he had a child with. There had been a physical altercation between the couple. She says Martinez punched her in the face, two times. Deputies say there were multiple injuries on the woman's face. Martinez was not there, but they put a BOLO alert out for him for Domestic Violence Battery. He was caught later that morning and arrested on \$25,000.00 bail.

A new doctor has started at Mendocino Coast Clinics. They put out a notice to welcome Dr. Patti Chico, a family medicine physician who they say is a perfect fit for the coastal community. She touts herself as a healer, a health coach and patient advocate as much as a doctor. She says she's focused on patients' physical and emotional needs. She graduated medical school five years ago and has worked in various settings, urban and rural.

The Clearlake City Council has decided after a year of closures due to the pandemic, they would reopen their meetings to the public. So, starting with their meeting tomorrow, the public can come back in person, but it will be with limited capacity, masks are mandatory as well as social distancing mandates. You can also catch the meeting on the city's YouTube channel or PEGTV. They're also offering Zoom participation. Tomorrow they will have some proclamations to read, hear an update from the Hope Center and hear discussions about a new Bus Stop Renovation and Promenade Improvement Project which has been bid for a half million dollars. The council will also hear a resolution from the Members of the measure V Citizen Oversight Committee.

Ukiah Unified School District Superintendent Debra Kubin has been named the 2021 Woman of the Year for Assembly District 2. Assemblyman Jim Wood says Kubin led an “amazing effort” during the pandemic not only to continue educating Ukiah’s students, but making sure over 3,000 students who needed food support got daily meals, including students even at charter and private schools. She also helped kids without computers secure Chromebooks as well as 150 hot spots for kids in remote areas of the district. Kubin has been the Superintendent for nearly a decade and has almost 30 years of experience in education.

Congressman Jared Huffman and other members of California’s congressional delegation are calling on the U.S. Postal Service Board of Governors to reconsider a 10-year contract with Oshkosh Defense for up to 165,000 Next Generation Delivery Vehicles, which only a fraction of would be electric vehicles. Huffman had also introduced legislation to replace 75% of the postal service’s fleet with electric vehicles as part of the Postal Vehicle Modernization Act. Huffman put out a statement saying the delegation was dismayed to learn Postmaster General (Louis) DeJoy said there would only be 10% electric vehicles, and they heard even that amount was highly questionable because the manufacturer of the vehicles had little experience manufacturing electric vehicles.

Another year of drought like conditions has left little water storage in area lakes. The Press Democrat reports the extremely low rainfall has meant low levels in Lakes Sonoma and Mendocino. The lowest, the paper reports, for this time of year since the reservoirs were filled decades ago. The water is especially low in Lake Mendocino which provides water for municipal and rural users in Ukiah and is responsible for producing flows in drier months for the Upper Russian River. Lake Sonoma was at about 63% of its storage capacity and Lake Mendocino had around 45%. The two lakes provide drinking water for over 600,000 people in Sonoma, Mendocino and Marin counties.