

### **KMKX FFC Reports Q1, 2022**

01/03/22 A brawl breaks out in Covelo New Year's Day after reports a man drove into another man with his truck. Police dispatch reported the melee' near Little Lake Way Saturday afternoon with two women fighting each other in the street. Police reported to the scene to break up the incident, blaring sirens and flashing lights. Mendofever reports there were at least twenty people gathered there. A man had broken up the women's brawl before police got there. Police reported the crowd had broken up as well. They're investigating a possible hit and run incident.

A former Ukiah mayor is organizing a candlelight vigil at the Mendocino County Courthouse in remembrance of the attack at the US Capitol last year. The event joins over 175 other similar events nationwide Thursday from 5-6:30 p.m. It's been one year since the insurrection where a group of pro-Trump antagonists broke into the US Capitol to try to stop the final certification of the 2020 presidential election. The local rally is to demand elected leaders pass urgent legislation including the Freedom to Vote Act, the Protecting Our Democracy Act, the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, and DC Statehood. Former Ukiah Mayor Steve Scalmanini is the contact for the event.

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Police in Clearlake Oaks take chase after someone in a white Lexus speeds by Clear Lake. The car ended up in the lake this weekend after the chase on Highway 20 which hit speeds of up to 85 miles per hour. Law enforcement threw down spike strips in Lucerne causing the car's tires to blow out. After a short time the Lexus veered off into the freezing cold lake. The driver was retrieved from the car and detained. They apparently had several warrants out for their arrest including one involving explosive materials and other weapons. They were checked out in the hospital first, then booked into Lake County Jail.

Several people have gotten together to search for a missing young man from Humboldt County. Kym Kemp reports there were more than fifty people gathered at the Seascapes Restaurant's parking lot in Trinidad this weekend to search for Hunter Lewis. He reportedly vanished while out canoeing nearby. His dad and another man organized the group's search. They were trying to get to more rugged, hard to reach areas in the little seaside town. They say the folks that showed up were willing to do harder climbs to look for Lewis. A large chunk of his canoe was located at Martin Creek Trail beach north of Trinidad.

Police video has been released of the police pursuit and capture of a man reported naked on the streets of Ukiah, suffering from bipolar disorder. Gerardo Magdaleno also has schizophrenia and had been off his meds last April when he was seen, unarmed, standing naked on South State Street. Police used force to take him down and they're being sued for assaulting him, kicking him in the head and pepper spraying him upwards of 20 times. So many cell phone videos caught the incident which caused an outcry locally. Now there's a lawsuit against four cops, a former police chief and the city of Ukiah for discrimination on the basis of a disability, wrongful arrest, excessive force, and inadequate training.

The Lakeport City Council is considering leasing part of Westside Community Park for a new horse park. The meeting tomorrow night in council chambers. If you're vaccinated, you can go in person. The City Manager Kevin Ingram will present the idea for a 30-year lease with the park for 7.5-acres for the horse park on Highway 175 near Mathews Road. They've been planning the park for years and finally have a plan. There will also be a public hearing at the meeting regarding the recycling of construction and demolition debris and discuss a water efficient landscape ordinance. They will also announce appointments to various boards, committees and commissions for the New Year.

The Lake County Board of Supervisors starts off the New Year with new leadership. They're choosing new heads of boards and committees tomorrow morning. They'll start with the election of the new chair and vice chair with the outgoing chair overseeing the election. Then they will pick leaders for the Board of Equalization and In-Home Supportive Services Public Authority Board of Directors and other committee assignments will follow.

A law going into effect in the New Year here in Calif. will change how you toss old food. You'll have to compost food scraps, instead of tossing them in the trash. A new law says you have to keep the scraps out of landfills. Compost bins will be collected curbside. So like you do with recyclables, you'll have to separate your food scraps from your trash. It will be hauled away from green bins. The law requires cities and counties reduce compostable waste by 75% by the year 2025.

With the Omicron variant spreading like wildfire, many people without health insurance are searching for options – and may find them on the Covered California marketplace. The open enrollment period runs through January 31st. James Scullary with Covered California says the uninsured risk getting stuck with huge medical bills if they end up having to go to the hospital.

:08 "Hospitalizations, particularly those that require ICU treatment, can be incredibly expensive, and average more than 127-thousand dollars per visit."

**Tag: The bill for someone with COVID who only needs outpatient care – commonly the fully-vaccinated – would average just over 13-hundred dollars, and much of that would be covered by insurance, according to the nonprofit group FAIR Health.**

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**Second Cut: The state estimates that 1-point-1 million uninsured Californians are eligible for free or very-low-cost coverage via Covered California or Medi-Cal. Scullary says the cost varies by zip code, income, and how many people in the household need to be covered.**

:16 "The savings and the financial help that is now available through the American Rescue Plan, is so significant, that if you checked a year ago, the entire thing is different. Many people are paying less than 10 dollars a month for comprehensive coverage from a name-brand plan that fits their needs best. "

**Tag: He adds that 75 percent of people on Covered California are paying less than \$100 a month for their brand-name health plan, like Anthem BlueCross, Blue Shield, Kaiser Permanente, and Healthnet. People can find the shop-and-compare tool on CoveredCA-dot-com.**

Some relief is coming to struggling cannabis businesses this new year. The Department of Cannabis Control (DCC) is accepting applications for state license fee waivers as of New Year's Day. It means those who run cannabis businesses and meet certain equity requirements can apply for the waiver of one license per 12-month licensure period. Prices continue to go down, but taxes are going up as outlined way back when in Prop 64. Equity programs for communities impacted by cannabis prohibition and the War on Drugs can apply for the waivers.

A crowd searches for a missing 21 year old in Trinidad, but his dad says they found something he gave his son years ago. Corey Lewis says he gave his now missing son, Hunter a treasure box. Searchers found part of Hunter's canoe, which went missing along with his son last week. They also found the treasure box at Magic Beach, also known as Martin's Creek Beach. The area, off Stagecoach Rd. north of Trinidad proper is hard to access, and where about 50 searchers fanned out this weekend. Searchers were looking on foot with boats, small aircraft and drones.

A doctor who was practicing in Lakeport and was found guilty of sexual battery on a patient has lost his license to practice. The Medical Board of California has revoked David Duncan House's license and surgeon's certificate after a conviction in Orange County last year for sexual battery and sexual exploitation of a patient who he was examining for a skin condition, but groped. There was an automatic revocation of his license after the convictions. He faced four years in prison, but instead got a year of probation, 3 months in jail and 45 days of home confinement. He also has to register as a sex offender. After he was charged, he worked in Lake County, at Adventist Health Clear Lake.

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A virtual symposium is being hosted by the Mendocino National Forest to come up with postfire restoration strategies. The symposium is January 26th featuring a host of speakers from across the region. They will present case studies and note lessons learned with national forest land managers who work in national forests in Northern California and at Lassen National Park. It comes after a string of even more threatening and dangerous fires over the last few years including the 2018 Ranch Fire, the 2020 August Complex fire and the 2021 Dixie fire.

The Sheriff's office has arrested a man from Potter Valley for domestic violence. A call came into the office December 30th with a victim in the lobby of the Ukiah station. They say the woman's fiancé Richard Page, who she lived with, became physically violent with her during an argument the night before. The woman says Page grabbed her by the throat and choked her and threw her around the inside of their home. She had visible scratches and bruises. Deputies contacted Page, but he wouldn't come out of their house, so the woman gave them her key, they finally got Page out of a back bedroom and arrested him for domestic violence battery. He was being held in jail on \$25,000.00 bail.

Water storage in area reservoirs is climbing after a dumping of winter rain over the holidays. Water in both Lake Sonoma and Mendocino rose exponentially after months of dry, parched weather and conservation. The National Weather Service also reports it's looking promising for normal rainfall this month into February too. Lake Mendocino has taken in more water this last couple of weeks, than all of last year and Lake Sonoma has risen to 60% of its water supply capacity. Both lakes were at their lowest levels ever at the start of summer for that time of year.

Several thousand people are still without power in the Sierra Nevada region. Pacific Gas and Electric Co. announced a few thousand had power restored over the weekend, but there were still as many as 25,000 homes and businesses in Northern California's mountains and foothills without power because of rains last week. Parts of El Dorado, Placer and Nevada counties have not had electricity for about a week. PG&E bigwigs gathered for a news conference on New Year's eve blaming record-breaking snow. Saying that caused widespread damage to their equipment and created a challenge for crews to get to the repairs. Due to the storm, the Governor declared a state of emergency in 20 counties, including Humboldt, Lake, Napa, Los Angeles and Orange.

In a unanimous ruling, the California Supreme Court said there can be no early release for violent felons, even if a primary offense is considered nonviolent under state law. The new ruling comes as the state was trying to further expand former Gov. Jerry Brown's initiative to alleviate overcrowding. It was approved by almost two-thirds of voters in 2016. But the Supremes said corrections officials acted properly when they wrote regulations excluding "nonviolent offenders" early parole consideration if an inmate was currently serving a term for a 'violent felony.'" That includes prisoners serving for a combo of violent and nonviolent felonies.

The Mendocino County Public Health Officer is putting the hammer down. Starting next month, a COVID-19 vaccine (and Booster if eligible) will be mandatory, or tests twice a week necessary for Emergency Medical Service workers. So Firefighters and staff, Law Enforcement, Temporary Disaster Shelters and Dental Offices and Pharmacy workers. Dr. Coren says omicron's increasingly spreading, making boosters essential to protect from illness, hospitalization and death. There was an order in place, but this new one adds the booster.

No more late fees at the Mendocino County Public Library. The library now one of many large or small public libraries nationwide who have decided to no longer fine people for turning in their materials late. It comes after a nationwide institutional movement, and recommendations by the American Library Association, to increase free public access to library services. And if you have a fine in place, it'll be forgiven this New Year, but, one caveat, fees for lost or damaged items stay.

For more information, please visit <http://www.mendolibrary.org> or contact the

Over one million marijuana plants and over 180,000 pounds of processed marijuana have been eradicated by the Bureau of Land Management Rangers and Special Agents with their law enforcement partners. The massive clear out of illegal grow sites in Calif. in 2021 as part of their yearly CAMP Program, the Campaign Against Marijuana Planting. Besides the pot and chemicals, there was ammunition and weapons, trash and water diversions. They also found almost 600 propane tanks and over 67,000 pounds of grow site infrastructure.

Detectives from Sonoma County are searching for a suspected bank robbery in Guerneville. They say Bradley Bennett is the thief who went into a bank on Main Street in Guerneville New Year's Eve, approaching a teller, handed them a note, demanding money, and signaling they may have had a weapon. The teller handed over cash and the guy got away on a bike. Deputies say it was Bennett, a homeless man described as Caucasian, 5'10" and 225 pounds, with brown hair and brown eyes. They're asking anyone who many know him or may have seen him to call Violent Crime Detectives in the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office.

Gas continues to surge in California with average prices in bigger cities getting close to the dreaded, five-dollar-mark. GasBuddy, a fuel-saving website which predicts pricing says it's probably because of the pandemic, that prices could hit between \$4.95 to \$5.25/gallon soon. The website tells the Sacramento Bee newspaper, Americans will most likely see higher prices this year, a sign that the economy is actually recovering from COVID-19. Right now, a price for a gallon of regular gas in the state capitol, is four dollars and 67 cents, nearly a buck fifty higher than a year ago.

The CHP says they made 510 DUI arrests during this past weekend's Maximum Enforcement Period. More than half of the arrests, 263, were on New Year's Eve alone. That's eight-percent higher than New Year's Eve of 2020. CHP officers averaged a DUI arrest every six minutes during the 54-hour enforcement period from Friday evening through Sunday night. They also reported 29 people were killed in crashes during that time period too.

As students get back to in person learning after the pandemic first arose, parents can now petition to get some of their previous grades changed to pass/fail instead of a letter grade. Seniors who were in 10th grade when the pandemic closed schools down may not have enough credits to graduate or, will graduate with fewer credits and requirements than years before. The Governor signed a new bill into law last summer for kids who earned D's and F's in the 2020-21 school year to instead get a pass or no pass grade. Students may also take a fifth year of high school too.

A new report says the amount of people moving to Calif. from across the country has gone down by 38% since the beginning of the pandemic. The amount of people living in California leaving though, is up 12%. The nonpartisan California Policy Lab reports the trends show the state has seen a population loss because of domestic migration that had more than doubled since pandemic first surfaced. Declines were the first since 2016. In Sonoma County, the amount of people leaving was up nearly 21%, in Lake County, it was only about 2% and get this, it was negative 5.6% in Mendocino County.

The first meeting of the year for the Clearlake City Council is a busy one. They'll consider a new cannabis operation, consider a new building project at the city's senior center and consider a proposal to ban illegal dumping. The meeting is Thursday and will be live on YouTube or on local cable or Zoom. You can also go in person if you want. They will have a public hearing regarding the appeal of the Planning Commission's green light for a commercial cannabis operation. Staff is telling the city council to deny the appeal. Then the council is taking up the matter of extending the temporary closure of some roads in the city and find a way to reduce illegal dumping. There will also be a discussion for a new warehouse at the Senior Center and appointments to various boards and committees.

The City Manager of Lakeport will start to get things rolling for that Horse Park we told you about at a city owned park. City Manager Kevin Ingram has been given the go-ahead to start the negotiations for a 30-year lease with Westside Community Park to develop the new horse park. The council voted unanimously for the lease during their marathon meeting last night. The only way the lease will go through though is if the park committee gets a \$3 million state Proposition 68 grant. Also, during the three hour meeting, city code updates regarding water recycling were covered, outdoor dining in right of ways due to the pandemic and buying some generators for city

01/05/22 water treatment facilities amongst a whole lot more in the New Year.

Once again, Pacific Gas & Electric power lines are being blamed for a massive fire that broke out in Calif. This time it was last summer's Dixie fire that burned a whole town down, much like the Camp Fire in 2018. The Dixie burned over 1,300 homes and other buildings. Investigators from Cal Fire say a tree hit the utility company's electrical distribution lines near a dam in the Sierra Nevada July 13th. The report went to the Butte County District Attorney's Office for possible criminal charges, which are no strange thing anymore. PG&E says they will continue to "be tenacious" in their efforts to stop fire ignitions. They have also promised to bury 10,000 miles of power lines to help prevent more catastrophic wildfires.

A lockdown has been ordered at the Sonoma County jail after another outbreak of COVID-19 in staffers and inmates. It's also the third time it's happened at the jail since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic. The Press Democrat reports seven jail employees and 12 inmates tested positive over the last week. There are two dorm units that have nearly 200 people quarantining to try to slow the spread as cases of the highly infectious omicron strain circulates.

A man the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office had been looking for after a bank robbery in Guerneville, has been arrested. Deputies caught up to Bradley Bennett who they say approached a teller at a Westamerica bank on Main Street, demanded money, acting like he might have had a weapon, then rode away on a bike. Deputies say they found him near a car that had a slashed tire yesterday after reports of a suspicious person. Deputies say there's video evidence of him pulling a knife and walking toward the car. He's booked into Sonoma County Jail on suspicion of robbery and held on bail of \$250,000.

A courageous woman in Lakeport says she saw a car crash and six men try to get away, so she video'd the incident from her car. She proceeded to ask the men why they would leave the area. It happened on State Route 175 near Old Hopland. MendoFever reports Samantha Mitchell told them she saw a van pull out of a vineyard into oncoming traffic and a red Cadillac crashed into the van. Then both vehicles crashed into a guardrail. She says that's when the group from the van ran to a small white truck down the road and she approached. But someone in the Caddy was injured and couldn't get out. The CHP reported the accident blocked a lane of highway and two tow trucks ended up reporting to the scene.

Workshops on climate change and projects to help with resiliency are being offered by the Hopland Band of Pomo Indians' Pomo Inter-Tribal Resiliency Hub. Mendocino Voice reports the tribe will provide the climate adaptation workshops year round, on subjects including demonstration projects on rainwater catchment systems, greywater systems, firesafe landscaping, aquaponics, and emergency response. The Tribal Chair says they've been impacted more and more by the climate changes with "catastrophic wildfires causing evacuations and unhealthy air quality, drought and extreme heat leading to food and water insecurity" leading to a loss of traditional foods, teas, fibers and medicines. They're partnering with PG&E on the workshops.

New laws in effect with the New Year. Hundreds of bills were considered by the Governor for passage. Some major ones that past the muster, stripping police officers found to be skirting the law or worse, of their badges. Officers can be kicked off the force for a slew of criminal offenses. And changes to what cops can get away with at legal protests and rallies. A change in zoning laws, so more affordable homes can be built. Banning secret settlements because of non-disclosure agreements between employers and employees. As reported this week, demanding more composting with green bins to be put out curbside. And among other laws, quicker mental healthcare follow-ups with insurance companies.

A woman from Fallon, Nevada arrested by the CHP in Lake County for arson is being transferred for treatment to a mental health facility. Nickelina Rose Williams was arrested last October after a fire started and a group of other drivers stopped to extinguish it. She was found by the CHP near the fire ignition point with a lighter in hand. The court ordered she be committed and that the treatment facility could give her meds involuntarily. A review hearing to transfer her is set for February 1st.

ICU's in Napa County are at capacity. Health officials in the county reported earlier this week they had reached the maximum number of patients they can allow in intensive care units. It was on Monday, the same day the nation reported a record single day of coronavirus cases, one million. The Napa health officer says the capacity limitations don't mean they can't take more ICU patients, they will have to adjust somehow. The county has lower ICU capacity since getting a waiver from the state for the usual requirement ICU nurses only care for two patients at once.

New emergency drought regulations have been announced by the State of California. No watering of lawns within 48-hours of at least a quarter-inch of rain coming down or using potable water on sidewalks, driveways, and buildings unless there is a health hazard. The new rules also say no to folks watering lawns to the point that runoff flows out of the homeowner's property. Violators might be fined five-hundred-dollars, but most likely only to repeat offenders.

Last year the Governor announced he wanted a bill drafted to allow private citizens the ability to sue gun manufacturers in California. It's now being considered in the State Assembly. Assembly Bill 1594 gives gun violence survivors and victims' families the right to file lawsuits against gun makers and dealers of firearms believed to be "irresponsible, reckless or negligent." Governor Newsom called for the law to be modeled after a new law in Texas that allows citizens to sue abortion providers. The governor's office said the U-S Supreme Court "set a precedent" by allowing the Texas law to stand.

The state Dept. of Public Health says you should wear a surgical mask or respirator, not a cloth mask. The Governor has mandated indoor mask wearing again and it lasts another couple weeks. The order implemented for one month starting Dec. 15th as cases of COVID continue to increase. He also cited the highly transmissible omicron variant as a reason. So the state recommends a surgical mask, either by itself or to double up with a cloth mask, or wear a N95, KN95 or KF94 mask.

As the state is once again slammed with cases of COVID19, this time of the omicron variety, hospitals and schools are the most impacted. The State Health & Human Services Secretary says some facilities will be "strapped". The Calif. Hospital Association also says about 40% of hospitals expect critical staffing with some already reporting as much as 25% of their staff are out with virus-related issues. For example in Los Angeles County, firefighters are driving patients to hospitals in fire trucks because 450 firefighters are out. Confirmed virus cases are up almost 500% in the state. At the same time the Governor extended the indoor mask mandate for another month, until February 15th.

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It looks like Sheriff Matt Kendall has won, and he gets to have outside counsel represent him on certain issues. It's been an ongoing question, whether or not there's a conflict of interest having county counsel represent the agency on issues regarding information and technology. A judge sided with the Sheriff there, but not three other issues, Kendall's personal liability in non-emergencies, for one thing. Also, he's not going to be able to hire his preferred law firm, the judge also didn't like the board of supervisors going around the Sheriff and hiring him a law firm of their choosing. The Sheriff also complained about his budget, the judge sided with the county there.

Congressmen Mike Thompson and Jared Huffman had some choice words on this one year anniversary of the insurrection of the US Capitol. Thompson, a combat veteran seriously wounded in the Vietnam War said it was one of the most "troubling times" in his lifetime. He was sheltered in his office with staff and colleagues watching the riots unfold on television. Huffman for his part, who was in the same building, said it was and is "surreal" and "ominous". Around 2,000 people entered the Capitol as VP Mike Pence presided over a count of the electoral college votes to certify now President Biden's win over former President Trump.

The State Dept. of Education is trying to hire thousands more school mental health counselors as there's a severe shortage. They want to hire as many as 10,000 more professionals, but lawmakers need to approve it. It comes as the federal government's health officials say more action needs to be taken due to the ever-increasing youth mental health crisis in the face of the pandemic. The state is looking to give incentives including tuition loan forgiveness and deferrals, scholarships and shorter times to get licensed.

There are still a slew of people without power in the Sierra Nevada mountains and foothills as PG&E has been unable to get to their equipment because of too much snow. The energy company says they're committed to get the power all back by Tuesday for most, and some may get their power on before that. Reports say 18,000 remain without power after storms nearly 2 weeks ago. But tens of thousands of homes and businesses were affected after record-setting snow fell in Northern California. Around 10,000 customers in Nevada County, 4,100 in El Dorado County and 3,800 in Placer County were still without energy as of yesterday.

2 teenagers and a teenage adult have been arrested after reports of guns out at Walmart in Ukiah. Police say they responded after a caller said the 15 and 16 year old and 18 year old Henry Gonzalez were pointing guns out the windows of a truck. They found the vehicle idling in the parking lot, then went after it. The kids took off towards Jack in the Box, then jumped out. They caught two of them, with a third and fourth running away. The 15 & 16 year old were detained and charged with misdemeanor resisting. The driver, Gonzalez was also found and arrested. No firearms were found but a bunch of weed was. The two younger teens were booked into juvenile hall, and Gonzalez was cited to appear in court and released. Ammo was found on the ground the next day.

Almost \$100 million dollars has been doled out to Cannabis businesses from state grants. The Department of Cannabis Control has awarded the money through the Local Jurisdiction Assistance Grant Program which was proposed by the Governor Newsom in his 2021-2022 budget, then passed by the Legislature. It's to move provisional cannabis licenses faster. Many are for small, equity and legacy cannabis businesses. 17 cities and counties are getting a piece of the pie, between \$400,000 to \$22,000,000 for more staff, new IT systems and for environmental reviews and new initiatives for water protection and renewable energy.

Looking to get a job with the Mendocino National Forest? They're hosting federal resume workshops in Upper Lake next Thursday, Jan. 13 and Willows, Friday, Jan. 21, which are free and open to the public. There will be staff on hand from the Forest Service to help those in attendance navigate the USAJOBS.gov website. They'll give resume tips and help you build a profile on the website. They want you to come with your resume in hand, and to bring a laptop or smart device, if possible. Please follow COVID guidance and wear a mask.

Participants can register for the workshop online: <https://bit.ly/FederalResume>

The Upper Lake workshop is at 9460 Main Street. The Willows workshop is at the Glenn County Office of Education, 311 South Villa Avenue. Both workshops start at 10 a.m.



The Fort Bragg Police Dept. reports keeping the front lobby closed to the public because of the rapidly spreading COVID variant circulating in the state. The dept. says due to omicron contagion, the lobby will be closed to the public starting today. There will be staff on hand though during regular business hours, but access is restricted to stay safe from the contagion. Certain items that are normally done in person, you should call from a telephone outside the front door and that will connect with a staff member who can help you. There is no Livescan/Fingerprinting service, but you can go to some area businesses to get that done. The agency says they will reassess in a couple weeks to decide if they will reopen the lobby at that time.

A teenager has been arrested for multiple crimes after reports of four people being chased by a car. Ukiah police reported four kids running down the street. Officers saw three people hiding behind a parked car and recognized one of them from an incident at Walmart in November. They say all three kids had tattoos identifying them as street gang members. So they were detained. Cops found a Glock handgun under a car they were hiding behind, it appeared to be an unregistered ghost gun. It was then determined the owner of the car was the one chasing them, one of the boy's parents, who happened to also be the fourth subject never caught in an incident where folks said 4 kids were showing them a gun from inside a car outside Walmart.

Lakeport is grappling with what to do about outdoor dining due to the ongoing pandemic. The City Council has discussed so-called parklets. But Lake Co News reports some business owners said the parklets were something they would have considered in the early days of the pandemic, but are now not as needed, plus they can block off entrances to businesses and impact, already sparse, parking downtown. The city approved about a dozen permits for these in the days when we were emerging from lockdown. The idea has received mixed reaction from the public and business owners. City staff are now working with the Lakeport Planning Commission for a permanent solution, but apparently it won't be ready until spring.

Assemblymember Cecilia Aguiar-Curry says she's running for office again in the newly drawn Fourth Assembly District. This district covers all of Yolo, Napa, Lake and Colusa counties, and the city of Sonoma and Boyes Hot Springs, El Verano and Eldridge in Sonoma County. The new district after the US Census and redrawing of district maps, just completed at the end of last year. Aguiar-Curry is representing the same district, but it looked a little different, with all or parts of Napa, Lake, Yolo, Sonoma, Colusa and Solano counties.

The man known as the Red Bearded Burglar is talking about his time on the run. 40-year-old William Evers admits in an interview with the Press Democrat that he committed the 8 burglaries across several Mendocino County communities until he was captured in November. In fact, Evers says he probably committed several more as he hid out for several months. Evers disputes charges that he fired at a deputy who was part of a search team looking for him in May. He tells the paper that he doesn't mind the notoriety—or the nickname—but that he expects to spend a long time in jail. Evers is locked up on 2.5 million dollars bail. He is due in court for a preliminary

01/07/22 hearing next week.

A one-time Lake County supervisor is running for county District Attorney. Anthony Farrington tells LakeCo News he is in the race because of encouragement from county residents and his own concerns about crime. He also says he knows what it is like to be a victim because his father was murdered when Farrington was 7 years old. Farrington's background includes service on the Lake County Board of Supervisors, representing District 4. He will face incumbent DA Susan Krones who is looking for a second term.

No more overdue fees at Mendocino County Libraries. The library says the change eliminates a barrier so all county residents can access library materials. There will still be a charge for replacements for any items that are damaged or not returned. Materials will still have due dates and can be renewed twice unless another patron has requested them. The board of supervisors approved dropping the late fees late last year. No-fee is a nationwide trend. Many libraries are doing away with overdue penalties as suggested by the American Library Association.

The Mendocino Land Trust is looking for public comments as it renews its accreditation from the national Land Trust Alliance. The organization says that accreditation recognizes local programs that meet national standards to protect natural spaces and working land. The Mendocino Land Trust also says that accreditation gives donors and other partners confidence in its work. If you would like to weigh in or find out more, the website [landtrustaccreditation.org](http://landtrustaccreditation.org) has the details.

Ukiah's Demolition Review Committee has approved a request to tear down two buildings on South Main Street downtown. One of the buildings houses a well-known local business called the Dragon's Lair. There was one "no" vote and some public opposition. The committee decided that the structure does not meet the criteria to remain standing as a historic structure. The city council will make the ultimate decision about whether or not building owners get a demolition permit.

Assemblyman Jim Wood says he's supporting bills to create a universal healthcare system in Calif. He's announced he's voting for AB 1400. He's the chair of the Assembly Health Committee. He says he continues to feel the "anger that many Californians experience in their efforts to access quality and affordable health care" as prices soar for brand name drugs and insurance premiums. He says he's worked with plenty in the healthcare field before and feels it's something that can be accomplished. AB 1400 would establish rules for a universal, single-payer system. It will be heard by Wood's committee Tuesday.

As confirmed cases of COVID rapidly increase in Lake County, the Public Health Officer, Dr. Gary Pace has put out a statement. Dr. Pace says after classrooms reopened after the holidays, there have been outbreaks in students and staff at local schools. There are recommendations from the state and Cal/OSHA as the omicron variant spreads through communities. Anyone vaccinated or not, asymptomatic or previously infected can end isolation after 5 days if they have no symptoms after first testing positive, or if they're getting better and have a negative test. Guidelines for staff are a tad different because they're governed by the state. Dr. Pace says they hope this latest surge only lasts about a month.

Another person has died from COVID19 in Mendocino County. The Public Health Office reports the 106th person to die in the county was a Ukiah resident. The 86 year old woman was vaccinated. They say fully vaccinated people over age 18 should strongly consider getting a COVID-19 vaccine booster to improve immunity.

[To find the nearest vaccine clinic in your area, please visit the Public Health v](#)

The Mendocino County Health Officer Dr. Andrew Coren has put out a new health update in alignment with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention regarding isolation and quarantining. Positive cases and exposure by a close contact can end their isolation or quarantine after 5 days with a negative antigen test if they have no symptoms and wear a mask for the other five days. It used to be a ten day quarantine. Also, a person who is current on their vaccine, is only considered to be, if they have a booster too. Dr. Andy Coren says the omicron strain's increased contagion makes boosters essential for a high level of protection from illness, hospitalization, and death.

Senator Mike McGuire continues pushing legislation against coal shipments through Northern Calif. A proposal for what McGuire says is a secret operation to ship millions of tons of coal overseas has passed with bipartisan support in the Senate Transportation Committee. McGuire says the proposed toxic coal train is an environmental disaster waiting to happen. He says SB 307 will protect the state with the required funding so there are improvements on the now defunct North Coast rail line north of Willits and does not allow state funds to be used for a possible bulk coal terminal facility at the Port of Humboldt.

Lake County just got schooled by a judge. The judge is ordering the county not to allow the construction of a multi-million dollar, upscale resort in the Guenoc Valley. The ruling cites the county failing to consider how the development would affect community safety and wildfire evacuations in the highly fire-prone area. The ruling after the Center for Biological Diversity sued against the 16,000-acre project where there are oak woodlands, wildlife corridors and habitat for sensitive wildlife species, including golden eagles, foothill yellow-legged frogs and western pond turtles.

The state has reported one of the all time highs of COVID19 cases for the third day in a row. The state Department of Public Health reports a positivity rate of 21.4% with a daily case rate of 107/100,000, up from 89 per 100,000 on Wednesday, and nearly at the all-time high we hit of 112 cases per 100,000 in January 2021. But the state also reported these latest numbers are an under estimate, because of a data processing error so it doesn't include Los Angeles County due to delayed submission. And the county was reporting over 22,000 cases a day.

The Kelseyville Fire Protection District's Measure A tax failed. A final canvass of the vote this week on Measure A, showed it did not get enough votes to create a new community services district. The idea was to bring in millions of dollars to pay for more staff, including up to eight more firefighters, build new facilities and buy new equipment. The chief says the new station they wanted to build would have reduced response time over a 100-square-mile area.

A dead body has reportedly been found in Hopland. The CHP was apparently flagged down Friday afternoon by someone around the area of Geysers Road and Highway 101 for a possible body. Sheriff's deputies went to the area finding the corpse in a remote field off the highway. The agency sent over Violent Crime and Crime Scene detectives. No other info was

01/10/22 immediately available.

After a routine traffic stop for expired registration in Covelo, a slew of weapons are found at a home. Leonard Whipple III and four juveniles were in the car, one of the kids, a 16 year old had an active warrant and a deputy said he saw smoked marijuana cigarettes, and bud marijuana inside. After a search, the deputy found materials consistent with the sale of marijuana. Whipple III was cited and released for transportation for sale of marijuana. The 16 year-old juvenile male was arrested and taken to Juvenile Hall. After a search warrant was served at Whipple III's home, a woman was arrested. Deputies found over a dozen guns and ammo, high capacity magazines and drugs. One was an assault weapon. No weapons were secured and a 13 year old lived there. So various charges including child endangerment were filed against Whipple III. There's a warrant for his arrest and for Leonard Whipple, Jr.

A traffic stop in Covelo ends in the arrest of a couple of men. The small truck was pulled over last Wednesday, and a bunch of open containers of booze were found inside. The driver, Christian Mendoza and his passenger, Jorge Campos-Diaz were inside and a deputy found that Campos-Diaz had four warrants for his arrest, one was a felony, so he was detained and a search of the car turned up an unloaded semiautomatic handgun under the driver's seat, and a spent .22 caliber cartridge. Mendoza was arrested for carrying a concealed firearm and held on \$15,000.00 bail and Campos-Diaz was held on \$25,000.00 bail.

The CEO of Mendocino County is out. Carmel Angelo has announced she's retiring after more than 12 years. She says March 19th will be her last day. She was apparently already planning to leave in October, but a serious illness in her family has her leaving sooner. She says last January she had another family illness, then in the past week, the same. Angelo says the decision to leave sooner came after last week's Board of Supervisors meeting, during which she was getting texts about her family. Before being CEO, Angelo was the county's Director of Health and Human Services and is a former nurse.

A man the Ukiah Police Department says seemed to be driving drunk has been arrested. Police say early yesterday morning Kody Idica was stopped along with his passengers, Monica Diaz and Dominic Idica. Kody was arrested for DUI after a field sobriety test. During a check of the car, a ghost, semi-auto Glock handgun was found loaded with 9 live rounds of ammunition. So the other two were also arrested on various charges.

Police say a man in Covelo's been arrested for causing a disturbance, banging on doors and windows of a home. Ambrose Fallis, who was found to be on Post Release Community Supervision was found at the home. He was searched and found with drugs, a violation of his release. He's arrested and held in Mendocino County Jail on a No Bail status.

The Governor has announced he's looking to spend hundreds of billions in his new budget. Newsom's new budget proposal includes a \$300 million expenditure, that includes more money on more law enforcement, with a focus on retail theft and another 2.7 bil emergency package for coronavirus testing and hospital staffing. There hasn't been a lot more reporting on what else Newsom intends to spend on. Last November, the Legislative Analyst's Office said they saw the state having as much as a \$31 billion surplus this year.

A joint meeting is set for the Lakeport City Council and Board of Supervisors for a shared tax proposal regarding the South Main Street area. Lake Co News reports the meeting tomorrow night in person and on Zoom. The board is meeting separately in the morning and may discuss closing Board chambers due to COVID. But tomorrow night, either way, they'll consider the tax sharing agreement with the city council related to the city's annexation of a 137-acre area across from South Main Street and Soda Bay Road. The city and county would share property tax and sales tax revenue from July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2040.

If you're planning to take a visit to a nursing facility in the state, plan to show your vaccination card. Under new rules in Calif. you must be fully vaccinated for a visit to a skilled nursing home, and boosted, if you're eligible. And that's not all, you also have to show a negative test result for COVID-19 for most indoor visits. If you're unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated, or eligible for a booster, but haven't gotten it, you might be able to have an outdoor visit, but also have to show proof of a negative test too. You will also need to wear a mask and physically distance from all except the resident you are visiting. The state Dept. of Public Health mandate goes at least until February 7th.

The Mendocino County Public Health Officer says there's no proof so far that omicron is in the county, but figures it probably is. At his briefing Friday, Dr. Andy Coren says the variant doesn't seem to have gotten here yet, but he doubts that. He adds the county doesn't have the data to show it is for sure though. He said the state and county though have entered, what he referred to as the "omicron blizzard." Dr. Coren says cases are doubling in the county by the day. There were 15/100,000 cases last Thursday, then 30/100,000 the following day. Dr. Coren reported hospitals had not seen a surge yet, but two hospitals were dealing with staffing shortages.

After State Senator Mike McGuire said he would do whatever he could to stop a clandestine plan to ship coal overseas from the Port of Humboldt, the Eureka City Council passed an ordinance that could further get in the way of any secret plan. The city council voted last week to ban handling, storage and transportation of coal on city property. There wasn't a whole lot of chatter about the ordinance as the council had already discussed the proposal numerous times. At the meeting, members of the No Coal in Humboldt Coalition called during public comment in support of the ban.

A new report shows the amount of Californians who have received a COVID booster shot were pretty low as the omicron variant starts to blanket communities. Reports of some hospitals being at capacity, infections at record highs and impossible to get tests, or testing lines stretching for hours. CalMatters reported only 38% of eligible Californians had received their booster vaccine. And that it varied by county with the far north of the state, and rural areas with the lowest numbers. The Bay Area had the highest rate, 55%. The state's Public Health Officer said after two years of the pandemic, he thinks there's some fatigue around it.

Our neighbor's Sonoma County have a new health order in place, stopping any large gatherings as the omicron mutation puts a stranglehold on events. Sonoma health officials are also asking residents not to leave their homes unless they have to go to work, school or out for necessities for 30 days. It's not a mandate, just a recommendation because of a rapid increase in cases. The Public Health Officer, Dr. Sundari Mase took to youtube, putting out a video about the health order, saying "we may be done with COVID, COVID is not done with us". It comes as hospitalizations are also rising.

01/11/22

Assemblymember Jim Wood says he's supporting universal healthcare in the state and will vote to move an assembly bill related to it, forward. Wood announced he's voting in favor of AB 1400 as the chair of the Assembly Health Committee. He says insurance companies are too in charge of what people can and cannot have and pharmaceutical companies are raising prices and pushing expensive brand medications. The bill is being heard in Wood's committee today. If it passes the policy committee at the end of the week, it must pass the full Assembly by January 31st, the deadline for all Assembly bills introduced in 2021.

Three more people have died from COVID19 in Mendocino County and 223 new cases have been confirmed. The three deaths give us a total now of 109 people who have passed away due to complications from the coronavirus. They were a 47 year-old woman from Ukiah, who was fully vaccinated; a 68 year-old man from the North County area, who was not vaccinated and an 81 year-old man, from the North Coast who was also unvaccinated.

A teen from Yorkville has been arrested for several crimes after being seen speeding against another car. Police in Ukiah reported a patrol officer saw two cars racing at the intersection of S. State St. and Washington Ave and one of the cars was driving recklessly. The other car got away. Four people inside the car they stopped had two male juveniles, one female juvenile and an adult male inside. There was booze in the car so the 17 year old driver was immediately arrested. And the officer noticed what appeared to be a gun with assault weapon characteristics on the passenger side, loaded with a high capacity magazine. So, the 14 year old passenger was arrested too. The female juvenile was released to a legal guardian and the adult male was released too.

A group of folks in the Middletown School District say they're not happy with the choice of a new school board member. Lake Co News reports the Board of Trustees choice is being challenged with a barely used process in state education code. The superintendent of schools told the news site he got a petition at the end of last year challenging the provisional appointment of Annette Lee to the Middletown Unified board. The code allows for these sorts of challenges if there's a petition with enough signatures on it sent to the county superintendent of schools within 30 days of the date of the provisional appointment. It comes after a couple of board members in their first terms resigned, so they had to replace them for a year. The board meets again Wednesday.

A new shopping center and hotel are being considered in Lakeport. The Planning Commission will consider the project at their meeting tomorrow. The public is welcome to join, if they follow COVID restrictions, or they can watch online. The "Lakeport Hub Project" will be presented. It's a shopping center and hotel development for 15.5 acres where there's an old walnut orchard, near the area of "Hamburger Hill". That's an area where there are a bunch of fast food restaurants. They want to put in a service station, six to eight restaurants, two retail buildings and a 70 room hotel.

Someone walking along Highway 101 apparently died in Mendocino County. Mendo Fever reports hearing on the police scanner and confirming on the CHP Traffic Incident Information page a pedestrian was killed after being hit by a car south of Willits. As the investigation started, officers closed one of the traffic lanes to gather evidence. Someone apparently called 911 to report hitting someone who was pushing a shopping cart near the Ridgewood Summit. The person who called it in after hitting the pedestrian, was apparently cooperating and had pulled to the side of the highway after the crash.

The state continues to make dark history, with over 6 million coronavirus cases now reported. The report by the Los Angeles Times noting the milestone while the omicron mutation continues its march through California. The state reported nearly 309,000 new infections Monday, which included cases confirmed over the weekend. Daily caseloads have been at their highest levels since last year. Many of the cases coming from Los Angeles County, which reported over 225,000 new coronavirus cases over the last week. The county reported three of its highest single-day totals of the entire pandemic, the latest record was on Sunday, with 45,584.

Advocates for the Food for All campaign like the Governor's new budget proposal, which would start an expansion of Cal Fresh for people 55 and older, regardless of their immigration status. Karen Giron, a Cal Fresh specialist with Hunger Action Los Angeles says it had been heartbreaking to turn people away before now.

:07 "So we're hoping that everything is already built in the system so we can just remove that requirement and allow people to get access to food, especially during the pandemic."

**Tag: Some advocates are also calling on the governor to consider spending some budget surplus on another round of stimulus checks to help low-income families pay for basic necessities.**

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**Second Cut: Nell Myhand with the National Poor People's Campaign in California says people who receive state disability, V-A disability, or who participate in Cal Works were unfairly excluded from the last round of stimulus.**

:11 "No price can be assigned to our unnecessary suffering. And even in terms of dollars and cents, it's much more expensive to deal with the consequences of economic policies that fail us."

**Tag: The budget proposal also includes 17 billion dollars to fund programs that increase housing or combat homelessness.**

Lake County's seeing a surge of COVID cases like a lot of other places, especially after the holidays. But a local school that had been hit hard by the spike in confirmed cases, Mountain Vista Middle School had to close. The Record Bee newspaper reports the school is trying to adjust its teaching protocol after the three day closure because of a staff shortage. District officials say it was due to COVID exposure. So, kids were instructed to do independent study through today when they could come back for in person learning. The news site reports calling out other schools, and that the Lakeport Unified School District and Lucerne Elementary said their schools were open.

The Gov. has signed an executive order to prevent price gouging on at-home COVID-19 test kits. It means those selling the kits cannot raise the price by more than 10%. It comes as the omicron strain consumes the state leaving some residents without the ability to even get tested or stand in long lines across the state or try to get ahold of rapid test kits as they quickly sell out at many stores and pharmacies. The Governor's office says it's to improve access and keep tests affordable. The order will also help law enforcers to take action against price gougers like in wildfire emergencies.

An expansion of geothermal electricity for the North Bay could be coming in Sonoma and Mendocino Counties. Sonoma Clean Power, already serving nearly a quarter million customers says they'd like to double the output to serve smaller communities in Lake, along with more in Sonoma and Mendocino counties. The company is proposing a so called GeoZone, or geothermal opportunity zone. Last month the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved joining. The CEO of Sonoma Clean Power says they're hoping to be done with presentations for each county by the end of February then open a request for proposals for new technology, then find the right locations for pilot projects.

01/12/22

The Governor's new budget puts more money into schools and community colleges. Over \$100 billion to be included in Newsom's budget for next year as a surplus emerges. The Governor spoke about his budget Monday and reiterated what we've been dealing with, stress and anxiety for kids during the pandemic. Under the proposal, k-12 schools and community colleges would get \$24 billion more, with most of that coming from the state surplus with more from Proposition 98. Teachers and other staff could get raises or cost of living increases. 2 billion in construction projects, money for higher education for high school career pathways, money for transitional kindergarten and preschools, more money for ESL programs and farm to table programs in schools. There would be over 3 billion for schools and community colleges in a rainy day fund.

The Calif. Dept. of Public Health is reportedly considering canceling or postponing elective surgeries due to a spike in COVID-19 infections and ensuing staff shortages. The state is deciding if they should issue an order for hospitals to suspend the surgeries where patients wouldn't be immediately harmed. Hospitals can of course decide voluntarily to do so. CalMatters reports hospitals are weighing their options as a cataract surgery or knee replacement could possibly be canceled, but not heart surgery or a breast cancer biopsy.

State Sen. Bill Dodd has introduced legislation for refurbished medical equipment to be used by others who can't afford some of the items. Wheelchairs and walkers can be reconditioned and that could give life-saving access to some which it would otherwise be out of reach to, due to the cost, or other barriers. Dodd says his bill will redirect essential items to people who need it the most so they can live with greater independence and quality of life. His bill would create a pilot program to begin with in Contra Costa, Napa and Solano counties.

The Governor's got a plan to make it easier to hire on more teachers and other school employees during staffing shortages due to the pandemic. He's signed an executive order for schools to be allowed to give substitute teachers more hours and rehire folks who recently retired, to fill in. But his order is just during the surge of cases and will expire at the end of March. Omicron has been hitting hard. Many school staff out after infection or being in contact with someone who is infected after winter break.



The Sonoma County Sheriff's Office says a body found along the 101 near the Mendocino/Sonoma County line last Friday has been identified. Deputies say a woman from Willits, Amber Dillon was reported missing last week, and the body was confirmed to be her. Officers on the scene of a "a possible deceased body" near Highway 101 and Geysers Road last Friday after someone flagged down a CHP officers after finding the body. Sheriff's deputies say the body was in a remote field, off the highway and they were trying to figure out how it got there.

A man from Ukiah has been arrested while out on bail for another crime. The Ukiah Police dept. reports seeing a parked black Mitsubishi Outlander with the driver's door open. The cop recognized the car matched one just reported stolen and a vehicle license plate check confirmed it. So the officer, with his firearm out, due to the car being stolen, commanded the man out of the car. Donavan Parrish got out and was immediately arrested. He was recently in custody for a burglary and now additionally charged for being in a stolen vehicle and committing a felony while out on bail. The registered owner of the car got her car back.

Congressmen Mike Thompson and John Garamendi have introduced legislation to protect the Walker Ridge area in the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument. The two Northern CA lawmakers have introduced the "Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument Expansion Act" to expand the area 4,000 acres to include the Walker Ridge tract, which is federally owned land. The original monument designated by President Obama covers Napa, Yolo, Solano, Lake, Colusa, Glenn and Mendocino counties. The entire ridgeline in Lake and Colusa counties will be called "Condor Ridge — which means "Molok Luyuk" in the Patwin language.

They were supposed to discuss an appeal against a new board member at the next Middletown Unified School District Board meeting, but COVID stopped that. The meeting was set for tomorrow night, but it had to be rescheduled. They were going to consider a resolution against COVID-19 vaccine mandates for staff and students, but one of their own is quarantining. Lake Co News reports the meeting will happen instead next Tuesday, the 18th. Then they will discuss the vaccine, and a petition against new board member Annette Lee who said she would like to consider new language regarding the vaccination idea. The Lake County Office of Education is reportedly helping the Registrar of Voters Office verify petition signatures regarding Lee's appointment, but that won't be done until the end of the month.

A man from Clearlake Oaks who police say was shooting at homes, then tried to assault a deputy has been arrested. The Sheriff's office reports Benjamin Wilkinson was the guy shooting at homes. When a deputy approached, after they set up a perimeter, they say the guy tried spraying the Deputy with bear spray. The Sheriff's office says there was a brief struggle with Wilkinson, but there were no injuries reported. And there were no injuries related to the shots fired. Wilkinson has been jailed for shooting at inhabited dwellings, resisting arrest and misdemeanor illegal use of tear

01/13/22 gas.

A man in Lake County's busted after police say he was trying to sell meth in Santa Rosa. Santa Rosa Police arrested Eulises Moya Gomez at his home in Lower Lake Tuesday and charged with suspicion of possessing meth for sale. He was singled out in November for selling methamphetamine across Sonoma County. They took a search warrant to his home, then he was detained. During the search, officers located over 2 pounds of meth and other evidence of drug trafficking, including packaging materials, digital scales, cell phones and about \$2,100 in cash.

Hospitals continue to be inundated with patients due to the overwhelming surge of omicron, so the state has come up with a plan. The coronavirus mutation has been causing shortages of healthcare staff, but they say illnesses are less severe than a year ago. But it's still wreaking havoc on hospital workers, so state health officials say they'll allow asymptomatic healthcare workers who tested positive to work. The policy is a stopgap though and ends February 1st. It's so many healthcare workers can remain on the job. The Press Democrat reports some healthcare workers and community members aren't really keen on the policy.

The state Attorney General says they're suing a phony health insurance company, calling itself a health care sharing ministry. The lawsuit against The Alera Companies and the Moses family. They founded the Sharity Ministries Inc., which was also a nonprofit at one time, called Trinity Healthshare. The state says they're actually a for profit company that is collecting hundreds of millions from thousands of Californians. They're supposedly selling unauthorized health plans and insurance and it's alleged they illegally denied members benefits but kept up to 84% of their payments. The state also says they denied claims on the regular, and spent only around 16 cents for every dollar they received for health care expenses. The Atty. General, Rob Bonta says it's essentially worthless coverage.

Two new members have been appointed to the Point Arena City Council. At a special meeting Tuesday, Jim Koogle and Richey Wasserman were added to take over for two councilmembers who resigned. The two have lived in the area a while and have served on the City Council and other boards and commissions in the past. There was a decision last fall to hold a Special Election for February, but only one candidate emerged. And since there was nothing else on the ballot, they decided to appoint members instead. The two will serve until 2024. The Mayor and Vice Mayor were also chosen, Scott Ignacio and Barbara Burkey respectively.

Like Sonoma County before it, the Mendocino County Public Health office says county residents should stay away from large gatherings and limit other gatherings and parties to 12 people if there are people who are at higher risk of contracting COVID-19 as the county is dealing with increasing cases due to the omicron variant. The mutation is much more contagious than other strains and can evade vaccinations. The Public Health Dept. reports cases in Mendocino County have more than quadrupled since Christmas and hospitals are nearing full capacity.

The town of Mendocino is now in a Stage 2 Drought Emergency. The Mendocino City Community Services District Board of Directors gathered for a special meeting last week to go over the rainfall numbers they use to determine the current drought level. There was about 20.40 inches of rain measured so far as of January 7th. Just under the cut to enter Stage 2 where twenty inches is required. Twenty-two are needed for Stage 1. So residents have to voluntarily cut back by 15%. There are also other requirements, including designated irrigation times, no car washing with a hose unless it has a shutoff valve and no filling of hot tubs or swimming pools.

A quarter million dollars has been awarded to recipients in Lake County after the annual wine auction. The Lake County Wine Alliance had their check presentation ceremony for the 2021 Lake County Wine Auction, which they put on each year to support the neediest in the community. Volunteers, the board of directors, donors, sponsors, and auction attendees helped dole out the cash. Some of the recipients included the Lake County Symphony Association, Adventist Shower/Trailer Project, Yuba Community College District, Lake County Senior Centers, Lake County Youth Services and Operation Tango Mike.

A man from Ukiah has been killed in a car crash with a motorcycle. Police say the crash was at S. State St. and Beacon Ln. between an SUV and a motorcycle. They found Charles Partridge, lying on the ground next to his motorcycle in the parking lot of a Mexican restaurant. They say he was unresponsive, CPR was administered by first responders, but he didn't make it. The full sized SUV had major damage, but nobody was injured inside it. The road was closed about five hours during the investigation. The vehicles were both impounded as evidence. Police say preliminary info shows the motorcycle crashed into the SUV as it was coming out of the restaurant parking lot.

The Governor is getting behind some possible revisions to the state's cannabis tax structure. Gov. Newsom said Monday he might consider changes to the taxes for marijuana cultivators and for buyers. He says in his latest budget proposal, that he supports tax reform and plans to work with lawmakers so that modifications can be made to help stabilize the market. The budget projects nearly \$800 million in cannabis revenue during the 2022-23 tax year.

It is back to remote learning next week in the Lakeport Unified School District. The district says when classes resume after the MLK break on Tuesday, students should be ready to log on for their lessons. Superintendent Matt Bullard, posting on the district website, blames a staff shortage tied to more Covid cases. Distance learning will be the rule until Tuesday the 25th. Before that the district will offer a free rapid testing clinic on Monday, January 24. Bullard hopes that all students and staff who plan to return to campus for in-person learning the next day will participate. According to the district, there were 16 positive COVID-19 cases among staff members and 62 among students, compared with 23 cases among staff members and 55 among students in the first two weeks of the new year. The Lakeport district website has additional information about the return to remote instruction.

01/14/22

The Mendocino County Sheriff's Department is investigating a suspicious death. Deputies say a passing motorist called 9-1-1 after seeing a person unresponsive near the intersection of Parducci Road and Christy Lane in Ukiah on Tuesday morning. Responding officers found a woman, identified as 22-year-old Allyssa Sawdey of Ukiah, dead at that scene. Detectives are waiting for autopsy results to determine just how she died. If you have any information about the case you can call the Sheriff's office anonymous tip line.

Some encouraging signs about the latest wave of Covid-19 cases in Northern California. Reports say tests done on sewage in the Bay Area show the amount of coronavirus in the wastewater is dropping. Those tests have been a marker of past spikes and dips in the number of cases. Among those expressing optimism based on those tests and other measurements, California Human Service Secretary Mark Ghaly. He says it is too soon to let our guard down but hopes we may have turned the corner on the latest surge of the Omicron variant

The state Employment Development Department is dealing with a new scam targeting disability insurance. That scam involves suspected organized groups filing fake unemployment claims using stolen information from workers and medical providers. More than 345,000 claims have been red-flagged for potential abuse. The department says it is reviewing all of them to be sure no legitimate claims are being denied. Officials say it is more important than ever for Californians to guard against ID theft, especially when filing unemployment or other claims with the state. If you think your personal information has been compromised, you can report it through a link on the E D D website

A woman from Clearlake accused of lighting fires in Lower Lake didn't make it to a recent court hearing, jailers say, because of behavior issues. It was agreed in court last November that Kayla Renee Main was going to be sent to a hospital for mental health treatment as she was unable to make decisions on her own. The court said if she was not treated with certain medications, she could potentially hurt herself. Then she was ordered back to jail after she went on the meds. There's another review hearing in her case coming up. Main is charged with arson of property, possessing material/device for arson and unlawful fire and violating probation, resisting and vandalism.

A new pedestrian bridge has been finished in Lakeport. The bridge links the Library Park parklands to where they're building a new Lakefront Park along the Clear Lake shoreline. It's on the north side of the Fifth Street public parking lot and goes all the way across a seasonal stormwater drainage course. The city's own Public Works Department built the concrete and steel bridge footings, installed the bridge after it was delivered, then finished up with more concrete work. The new park, which is being funded by a state Parks & Water Bond will start construction later this year.

The Rotary Club of Willits Student Debt Assistance Program is accepting applications. Those who live in the city of Willits who need help paying down student loan debt can apply. The program is to encourage local area college or career tech school graduates, active in the community, to stay. The Rotary Club's program came about in August of 2020. The following Spring, of 2021, the Willits Rotary awarded ten area residents grants of \$300/month for one year. Applications are available starting tomorrow, with a deadline of Feb. 19, 2022.

If you were impacted by last summer's Hopkins Fire, you still have time to enroll in the debris removal program from the state. The California Dept. of Emergency Services program cleans up fire debris out of properties for free. The fire in Calpella started last September and burned nearly 260 acres and destroyed 67 structures, over half of them, homes. The beginning of the cleanup work started about a month later because of weather related issues. If you meet the requirements from the state, including submitting soil samples, then and only then, can you start your rebuild. You can certainly hire private contractors for cleanup, but you'll have to follow the same requirements before your rebuild.

An online workshop is being held by the BLM Ukiah Field Office regarding the South Cow Mountain OHV Management Area. They're looking for public input next Thursday on the area to make it more family-friendly, increase safety and improve the trail system. The workshop will show proposed routes, facilities and other improvements at the off-highway vehicle recreation site. They want public feedback to help identify new trails and redesign routes for better connectivity, find safer solutions for shared trails, provide greater public access, and offer a more enjoyable experience.

To participate in the workshop, please register at least 30 minutes prior to the

One person is dead after a fire broke out at a home in Fort Bragg. The Mendocino County Sheriff's Office says they're not sure who died, due to the condition of the body, but they say they think they know who it is. They say they will use medical records and DNA analysis to confirm. Mendo Fever says they heard on the police scanner the fire broke out yesterday morning after 7. The dispatcher reported to responders that explosions were heard coming from the structure. They reported the fire out in under a half hour.

The tax sharing agreement between the City of Lakeport and the Board of Supervisors has been approved for a proposed annexation of the South Lakeport area. Lake Co News reports the City Council and the board had a joint meeting Tuesday night and they all voted unanimously to move forward. The news site reported both sides called the deal a "win-win". The 135-acre South Lakeport Annexation Project area has 50 parcels running along South Main Street and onto part of Soda Bay Road. The city has eyeballed the property as part of its sphere of influence since at least the 1980s. It's supposedly the most lucrative commercial area in the county's jurisdiction.

Members are still needed by the Governing Board of Lake and Mendocino Cc

A barricade situation in Laytonville has ended. A man reportedly locked in a car with a SWAT Hostage Negotiation Team, and Behavioral Health staff there to help de-escalate the situation. The Mendocino County Sheriff's office reports Christopher Brockway had recently been jailed on felon in possession of a firearm, forgery, possession of stolen property, conspiracy and identity theft charges and was granted short term release. He did not turn himself in so when cops tried to get him to surrender he wouldn't and the barricade situation started. He reportedly threatened he would kill himself as a CHP helicopter hovered over the situation. The Sheriff's office reports the man became hostile and wouldn't surrender so they used rubber bullets, a taser and finally a police dog took Brockway down. Neighbors were also told to stay inside. After the suspect was detained, medical personnel were called to the scene.

01/17/22

Private well owners in Sonoma County are getting help to make sure their drinking water stays safe as changes occur due to the drought. Groundwater tables are lower so some wells could have matter in them that make the water unsafe to drink. The county warns you should test your water to make sure it's safe, to look for naturally occurring contaminants and if there are unhealthy substances, get help from a private water treatment expert. Also Environmental Health is working with the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, the Sonoma County Water Agency and Permit Sonoma to put up a digital resource hub to help Sonoma County well owners.

The resource hub can be viewed at: <https://socoemergency.org/emergency/d>

A car crash on Hwy 20 in Nice has killed a pedestrian. Apparently an elderly white man had been jumping in and out of traffic over the weekend and was hit by a car and the man's body was laying in the middle of the road. The Lake County Sheriff's Office was on the scene, but not a lot more info has been released so far.

The Kelseyville Unified School District is deciding if they should send a formal letter of opposition to the state regarding COVID vaccine mandates for students and staff. The board's meeting tomorrow night to discuss the matter due to a staffing shortage. Those who attend the discussion have to wear masks. The resolution mirrors one accepted last month by the Lakeport Unified, Lucerne Elementary and Konocti Unified School District boards. Lake County News reports though that the Kelseyville resolution has some differences including continuing to partner with public health agencies to educate and offer vaccination info for school-age children and employees, but they don't want mandates.

A tree that could not be reached by Pacific Gas and Electric because of nesting Bald Eagles is apparently a hazard that needs to be removed. A spokesperson for the energy company says an in house expert said the massive pine tree on Ridgeway Highway in Potter Valley is "dying" and could possibly fall into nearby power lines. So they say to continue to fulfill their mandate to protect public safety, they need to take the tree down. The spokesperson also confirmed there is a Bald Eagle nest in the tree, but that it's been called "inactive" and the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife gave them the greenlight to fell the tree. They were trying to do it by Friday or Saturday but there were people gathered there and they couldn't gain access.

First 5 Lake County has a new executive director. Samantha Bond was hired locally after spending the last five years as the First 5 Mendocino County public relations manager. She says she believes the work of the organization has had an "immense positive impact for families with young children". She says she's "humbled to be able to continue this great work" in Lake County. She has previously worked in group homes with kids with severe mental and behavioral health challenges. She holds a bachelor's degree in Psychology from the University of California, Davis.

A group of cannabis industry advocates and business owners in the Emerald Triangle along with farmers and Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) at the Capitol calling on lawmakers to get rid of the cannabis cultivation tax once and for all. Last week the Governor signaled he might be willing to bend in some areas. Some attendees said the state was in crisis as prices of cannabis are going down but taxes were increasing and that it was disproportionately impacting small cannabis farmers and BIPOC, calling it unsustainable.

New cases of the omicron strain of COVID19 are overwhelming hospital emergency rooms in the state. The Los Angeles Times is reporting the virus is spreading at the fastest pace it has since the pandemic first arose in California. The report says health officials are expecting a potential hospitalization disaster, even though the symptoms are supposedly minor compared to delta. The report also says the omicron mutation could peak soon as hospitals consider whether or not to cancel scheduled surgeries and ambulances face long delays dropping off patients.

If you were wondering why there was a widespread tsunami warning Saturday, an undersea volcano erupted near the Pacific nation of Tonga. Tsunami waves came crashing down across the shore with people being warned from the Mexico/San Diego to the Oregon border to get to higher ground. Tsunami advisories were issued for Hawaii, Alaska and the U.S. Pacific coast. There haven't been reports of injuries, but we heard Point Arena harbor had experienced 3.5 foot surges, Santa Cruz reported some flooding and damage. And two fishermen had to be rescued in San Mateo County too. Satellite images on Tonga showed a massive eruption, with a plume of ash out of the ocean with steam and gas rising above, in the shape of a mushroom.

man from Redwood Valley has been arrested after calls to the Sheriff's Dept. about a burglary. On Saturday night, on the 8th of January, deputies went to a home where residents said their ATV was missing and that a car in their driveway had some items stolen. Their home was also ripped off and ransacked. The ATV was found crashed on the side of the road nearby. After collecting evidence from the entire area, they found no suspect. The next day Deputies got a call to two homes on the same property nearby. They found Dominic Singelton hiding in one with items from the burglary the day before. He was arrested for several crimes and on active parole for another burglary in the same neighborhood. He's jailed without bail.

01/18/22

A man and 2 women have been arrested after a domestic assault on another woman in Redwood Valley. Mendocino Deputies contacted a 21 year-old woman who shares a child with Nathan Feliz. She says as she went to hand over the youngster, he hit her multiple times in the face, and pulled on her leg to try to get her out of her car, then left with the small child. Deputies couldn't find him nearby but did find him in Willits. They also found Vanessa Sanchez and Kiahna Feliz there who wouldn't let Deputies inside. They heard a child crying and got a search warrant and eventually found Feliz hiding at an apartment next door where a neighbor didn't give him permission to enter. He was arrested and held on \$50,000.00 bail. The two women also arrested and held on \$15,000.00 bail.

A call in Ukiah about a man with a knife brings out police. On their way police were told the man was trying to break into an apartment. They identified him as Andrew Custer where they say as they approached, he advanced to one officer, mumbling incoherently, carrying what looked like a 4-foot-long broom stick with a knife tied to its end, like a spear. They found out he was threatening neighbors with the spear and commanded him to drop the weapon, but he ignored them. They recognized him from previous contacts, knowing he had mental health challenges. Another officer came and Tased Custer who was taken into custody. He did injure one neighbor so he was arrested for burglary, assault with a deadly weapon on a peace officer and attempted murder.

Congressman Jared Huffman along with a colleague from Missouri has introduced legislation to help rural hospitals. Huffman and Congressman Sam Graves came up with a bipartisan bill, Save America's Rural Hospitals Act which they say will infuse money into rural hospitals on the brink of bankruptcy and get critical care providers the help they need. Huffman says the hospitals stepped up in our time of need, and his bill with Rep. Graves will take the necessary steps to keep these facilities stay afloat and protect access to high-quality care with greater Medicare reimbursement. The bill would eliminate Medicare sequestration for rural hospitals, make Medicare telehealth service enhancements permanent and extend increased Medicare payments for rural ground ambulance services currently set to expire December 31st.

[The "Biggest Catfish Tournament West of the Mississippi" is accepting applic](#)

A hearing is continued this week by the Clearlake City Council regarding an appeal of a cannabis operation the Clearlake Planning Commission approved last year. The council's meeting in closed session first, then at 6pm tonight will hear about the appeal of the Planning Commission's approval of conditional use permit and mitigated negative declaration for the 15 acre cannabis operation on Ogulin Canyon Road. Staff have recommended the council deny the appeal filed by Dave Hughes. The council has other business too including meeting this month's adoptable dog.

The Fort Bragg City Council has given their approval to enter into an employment agreement for an Interim City Manager. Starting January 3rd, Dave Spaur took the wheel at a rate of \$76.30/hr. Also at the first meeting of the new year, the police department reported to the council on the winter weather shelter which they're managing for the first time. It's an overflow service from the Hospitality House when it's too dangerous for sleeping outdoors. They use the Motel 6 and do not allow alcohol, drugs, or guests and risk being kicked out if they partake.

For the first time ever, Lake County has a woman leading the Agriculture Dept. Katherine Vanderwall has been appointed Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer of Weights and Measures. Vanderwall is a native, born and raised in Lake County. The chairman of the Lake County Board of Supervisors noted there wouldn't be anyone else as well positioned for the role, and they're excited she has stepped up to serve. She's been the Deputy Agricultural Commissioner and Sealer of Weights and Measures for the last five years.

Congressmen Jared Huffman and Mike Thompson have honored a local winery owner on the floor of the US House. Last month a resolution in honor of Martha Barra for her 80th birthday and in recognition of her four decades of organic grape growing was read into the record. Huffman's resolution said Barra has been a trailblazer in Mendocino County's early wine industry, learning the business inside and out, looking for ecologically conscious agriculture and production methods early on. She currently oversees vineyard operations, does local tastings and hosts events at their property in Redwood Valley.

A slump in the economy in the North Bay like so many other places in 2020. Recently released data from the federal government shows the region was hard hit but rebounded in 2021 as travel and hospitality sectors recovered. The hardest hit, Napa, with Solano and Lake counties GDP pretty much unchanged. Sonoma and Mendocino counties were down around 3-3.5% and Marin only 1%.

If you've been impacted by the Hopkins Fire that burned at the end of last summer, Phase II has begun of consolidated debris removal. On Monday, the second phase started for those who filled out the Right of Entry forms to allow state workers to take out household toxins and fire debris. The work will continue on Eastside Calpella Road along with a second crew on Lake Ridge Drive. They warn to be careful as you travel in the area because there will be heavy equipment and workers actively removing debris. They say to look out for other crews

01/19/22 assessing hazardous trees.



Intro: The State of California has a new program to pay college students 10-thousand dollars to do public service work for a year. The state expects up to 65-hundred students can join the new “Californians for All College Corps”. Students have to donate 450 service hours, working on issues like COVID-19 recovery, climate change and education. Josh Fryday, chief service officer for the state, says it’s a way to help low-income students afford college, earn credits and gain valuable work experience.

:07 “Like the G.I. bill, if you are willing to serve your community and give back in meaningful way, we are going to help you pay for college.”

Tag: 45 Calif. campuses will take part – including schools from the University of California and California State University systems, plus community colleges and some private schools. For more info, visit the ‘Californians for All College Corps’ website for a list of schools and details on how to apply.

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Second Cut: Governor Gavin Newsom says the shared experience of giving back is intended to foster a new generation of civic-minded leaders.

:08 “And if this thing works, we can go back to the Legislature and take it to a whole another level. We can take it to the rest of the country, because nobody else is doing this. Nobody!”

Tag: And unlike AmeriCorps, this program will be open to so-called “Dreamers” – undocumented students who were brought to the U-S as children. Students who receive Pell Grants will also be able to count the 10-thousand-dollar grant toward their required personal contribution to their education expenses.

Intro: A coalition of more than a hundred local elected officials is pleading for action on the PUBLIC Lands Act, a bill to add protections for more than a million acres of land and 500 miles of rivers. The group sent a letter today thanking California Senators Dianne Feinstein and Alex Padilla for their support. Ventura County Supervisor Carmen Ramirez says more needs to be done to safeguard the state’s pristine wilderness areas before it’s too late.

:16 “These are places with abundant diversity. That’s where a lot of our clean water comes from. We have tribal cultural sites. And oil drilling and other harmful industries should not be permitted where we have our natural resources.”

**Tag: The letter emphasizes the importance of public lands in the fight against climate change, and promoting access to the outdoors for public health and economic recovery.**

**Second Cut: Susan Seaman, the mayor of Eureka, says local economies thrive when the ocean, rivers and old-growth forests are protected.**

:17 “I think it’s pro-economic development to create a community that encourages visitors, encourages people to want to come and live here. The thing that makes us special is the lands that we have around it. And the more we can protect them, the more we can protect the culture that we love here.”

**Tag: The Senate bill was introduced in May but has yet to receive a vote. The House version passed last February which includes three bills covering northwest California, the Central Coast, and the San Gabriel Mountains.**

Sonoma County is dealing with a spectacular surge of active COVID. There have been 18,415 since late last month. The Press Democrat reports that’s a tenfold increase since Christmas and four times more than last winter’s surge. The paper reports an infectious disease expert from UC Berkeley says positive cases could actually be two to three times higher than conservatively speaking because many people don’t even know they’re infected or never got a test. Dr. John Swartzberg says a more “aggressive” estimate would be “five or more times”.

It was a swift no at the Kelseyville Unified School District Board meeting to send a note to the state against a vaccination mandate. The board deadlocked as one board member was out, so the resolution died. And the board chair says it won't see the light of day again. It comes after the State Department of Public Health issued a health order mandating school staff show proof of full vaccination or get tested at least once/week. Then the Gov. said he wanted the COVID-19 vaccine to be on the list of vaccinations for in-person school starting this summer. Konocti Unified, Lakeport Unified and Lucerne Elementary approved resolutions against the mandates and just last night Middletown joined.

Three separate car crashes in Lake County have killed three people. Lake Co News reports they happened Saturday through Sunday night. The first, a pedestrian was killed in Nice, then a wrong-way driver on Highway 29 near the Lake County Jail died after crashing and rolling his car, and a passenger died after a car they were in hit a parked truck in Lucerne. The pedestrian was identified as Kevin Jones, who the CHP says was in the roadway and hit by a driver Saturday night who couldn't stop in time. Then later the wrong way driver was killed, he's identified as Benjamin Britton, of Covelo and Lucerne. Witnesses say he entered the wrong side of Highway 29 in Lakeport, then hit a metal bridge abutment and rolled. The final crash killed Justin Dale of Lucerne who was the passenger in a car driven by Patricia Murphy who officers say made an unsafe turn and rammed a pickup truck. She's suspected of DUI.

A barricade situation along the South Coast of Mendocino County has reportedly ended. Mendo Fever reports hearing a home invasion was happening on the police scanner near the intersection of Old State Road and Seaside School Road. There was a shelter in place order for nearby residents after two people were reportedly barricaded in their home with twenty others there who were armed and trying to get inside. When cops got there, they say several people outside who ran when they saw them. They put out a Be On the Lookout alert for at least one of them. Several local law enforcement officers responded and are investigating. The home was cleared and secured. No word on motives or arrests.

The Charter School Association of Willits has a hybrid board meeting, held in person and on Zoom. But some technical difficulties were reported for those online, saying they couldn't hear a lot of what was going on. In any case, they proceeded with the Willits Elementary Charter School (WECS) and Willits Charter School (WCS) giving pandemic updates on mask wearing, quarantining and testing. They are not allowing parents on school grounds to slow the spread, but will revisit next month. They will test students twice/week in order to attend in person. Staff and students will wear masks on campus at all times. Schools have also been checking students' temperatures.

The state of California is being impacted by the ongoing opioid epidemic, with it being super impacted by fentanyl. The drug reportedly killed as many as 10,000 residents in the year that ended April 2021. CalMatters reports the Governor has earmarked \$50 million to educate young people about the risks of opioids and fentanyl through preventative measures, harm-reduction messaging, or both. The news site reports fentanyl is oftentimes mixed with other drugs and the user is in the dark about it. The report says the district attorneys in Riverside, Orange and San Bernardino counties are charging drug dealers with murder in fentanyl-related deaths, something some public defenders say is illegal.

The property swap agreement that's been the subject of ongoing discussions in Clearlake for a new Sheriff's headquarters and affordable housing project is done. Sen. Mike McGuire made the announcement yesterday, the same day he was announced as the new State Senate majority leader. He and others, from the city, county and state gathered to discuss the land swap. The board of supervisors approved the agreement last year. It's for 15.5-acres of county owned property in Clearlake and for 7 acres of the Lakeport Armory property, owned by the state next to the Lake County Jail. The Governor signed an Executive Order so the state would identify and prioritize any extra state-owned property because of the affordable housing crisis.

State Senator Mike McGuire is the new Majority Leader of the Senate. He was appointed by Senate President Pro Tem Toni Atkins. So McGuire's now in a power position, the second highest ranking member of the State Senate. McGuire said he was grateful for the position, after serving the last three years as the Assistant Majority Leader. He says his top priority has always been the North Coast which has been challenged over the last several years with "multiple wildfires, floods, extreme drought and this pandemic".

Congressman Jared Huffman has announced nearly \$7 million dollars from the Infrastructure deal for long needed operations and maintenance work. Huffman says waterways, dams, and jetties are vital parts of communities and the economy on the North Coast, but many are in disrepair. He says the \$7 million will be for three projects: \$20,000 for Jetty Monitoring in Bodega Bay, nearly \$3 million for new emergency and service gates in Lake and Channel, and about \$4 million for the Coyote Valley Dam for bridge repainting, replacing bathrooms or repairing them, and cleaning, demolishing and rebuilding areas destroyed by the Hopkins Fire. The money will come from the Infrastructure Act and from stimulus money associated with the pandemic.

Rumors have been circulating on social media platforms that there's a serial killer after women in Mendocino, Sonoma, and Napa Counties. Mendo Fever reports speaking to the Sheriff who says it's unfounded hearsay. Posts on Facebook Northern Calif. groups that the two first deaths were serial killer victims, both women from Mendocino County, then the alleged suspect added two other women, one from Sonoma County, and another from Napa County. The news site reports law enforcement from each county said there was no indication any of the deaths were related.

A company from Mendocino County is going to be the interim operator of a new North Bay passenger rail agency. Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit officials say they need more time to form their own in house operation as they take over the Northwestern Pacific Railroad Co. So, in the meantime, they've hired Summit Signal at nearly \$400,000/month. The company will start to run freight cars March 1st with a three month contract. Right now Northwestern has four freight customers, carrying mostly grain and feed in Petaluma. They also store tanker cars for oil refineries and others.

Some safety complaints have prompted the Lakeport City Council to review again. After the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee was formed in 2015, they started to go over traffic trends at that time. The City Manager, Kevin Ingram told the City Council they were working on a Local Road Safety Plan after traffic complaints were expressed at a council meeting about a year ago. Ingram says there have not been more complaints that were worthy of spending time on, that they had not already heard about. At the same meeting, the council has approved an application for the Small Community Drought Relief Program.

The federal government has a new internet affordability program coming to certain households. And Mediacom Communications has announced they're taking part in it: the Affordable Connectivity Program. It's so more Americans get access to lower costs associated with home internet service. The FCC manages the program giving certain households up to \$30 off their monthly internet service. It's for households with income less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines or who participate in government programs like SNAP, Medicaid, WIC, and Lifeline. It will replace a temporary Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) program which Mediacom says they enrolled over 13,000 households in last year. For more information, call: 855-330-6918 or visit [www.fcc.gov/acp](http://www.fcc.gov/acp) <https://www.mediacomcable.com/acp>

An ER Doc is reporting Ukiah hospital rooms are filled, and that's not all. The Daily Journal reports Adventist Health Ukiah Valley ER physician Dr. Drew Colfax said he was challenged to find a bed in the entire state for one of his patients. He says he believes the state is at the peak of omicron COVID cases, but maybe not so much in Mendocino County. He says it does seem that there is an improvement though. There were over 500 new cases in the county over the last week for a total of over 10,000 cases since the pandemic surfaced.

Schools are still being challenged to staff up as the spike of COVID cases is still an issue. Public health experts statewide say they think the omicron surge should be behind us by March, but it's caused quite the school staffing crisis which could go past that. The state shows students and staff members in various school districts are getting infected at all-time highs. Apparently waste water testing is showing less case numbers, but schools have been dealing with this nearly two years. Last year K-12 schools had nearly 20% of all workplace outbreaks in the state, and more than health care facilities last fall.

Police in Lakeport will soon have a new tool in their crime-fighting kit. The Lakeport City Council has approved a \$22,000 contract for 8 automatic license plate reading cameras. Lake Co News reports the approval vote was 4 to 1, with Councilmember Michael Green voting no because of privacy concerns. Police chief Brad Rasmussen says privacy is protected because only trained and authorized people will get to see the images that will only be used when a vehicle has suspected involvement in a crime. He calls the cameras the equivalent of having an officer on the streets in many locations. Clearlake and Lake County already have similar systems in place. Under the terms of the two-year deal with vendor Flock Safety, the city can have the cameras pulled for the cost of taking them down.

01/21/22

A man from South Korea has been sentenced to two years in federal prison for stealing hundreds of endangered succulents from state parks in Mendocino and Del Norte Counties. 46-year-old Byungsu Kim will also have to pay 4,000 dollars restitution for expenses related to the stolen plants after his arrest. He pleaded guilty to the charges in September. Prosecutors say Kim and two co-defendants uprooted the Dudleya plants from DeMartin State Beach, Del Norte Coast Redwoods State Park, and Russian Gulch State Park back in 2018. They were arrested as they tried to ship more than 3,700 plants worth more than \$150,000 on the black market to South Korea using false documentation claiming they had permits to do so. Kim skipped out on those charges and was eventually arrested again trying to pull the same scheme in South Africa and extradited to the US. One of his co-defendants has already served time, the other is still a fugitive.

If your travel plans include a trip to Yosemite this summer, you might want to re-think them. Park officials say they may require day-use permits and reservations due to major construction work planned at the park. The national park service says limiting visitors may be the only way to avoid huge traffic jams on roadways. Several popular campgrounds will also be closed. The construction is part of the Great American Outdoors Act passed by congress in 2020, which provides billions for repairs and upgrades at America's national parks. The park service says inconvenience this summer will lead to a much better park experience once the upgrades are done.

After an attempted stop in Ukiah of a guy on a bike without the proper safety equipment, Deputies say he took off down a trail. Deputies tried to stop Paul Nelson for no forward facing light or rear reflectors. So they switched on their overhead lights to try to get Nelson to stop, but he refused, and picked up his speed and headed onto a trail to the Mulberry Street area. There he ran into California Highway Patrol Officers waiting for him. Deputies found he had a warrant out for his arrest, plus he was on probation. He was arrested for the Felony Arrest Warrant, and violating Probation and adding Misdemeanor Resist, Delay or Obstruct Public Officer and held with no bail. Sheriff's Deputies are searching the Gualala area after a 911 call about an attack. The victim said several people came to his home with guns, one was an AR-15 rifle. He said someone named "Yuri" was trying to kill him. A shelter in place order was announced to neighbors, but the alleged victim took off, leaving a friend behind. Deputies and the CHP saw someone running away and another man nearby and set up a perimeter. While there they found an illegal cannabis operation. They got a search warrant and took 1,900-pounds of processed cannabis from the home. They identified Yuri Andrade as a person of interest, but so far no arrests have been made.

#### [The Mendocino Public Health Dept. has announced another two deaths from](#)

A man has been arrested in Ukiah on several charges after a call to an apartment building. Police say Jose Estrada Wirt was arrested after a physical fight. One man was seen with moderate injuries and said he was in a fight with Estrada Wirt where he pulled a knife on him. Police say Estrada Wirt also drove an SUV at the victim and rammed him with the front of the vehicle, then took off. They are still searching for the man. The victim ended up in the hospital. A BOLO alert went out for Estrada Wirt who was found the next day and jailed.

A woman from Ukiah has been arrested after a call to a man being cut in the throat. Police say they reported to the scene, finding Tatiana Franco Cortez. Cortez reportedly had the knife on her when they got there. Backup officers arrived and found the woman and arrested her at gunpoint as she was still in possession of the weapon. Franco Cortez's victim says he was eating breakfast when he was attacked and yelled at for an unknown reason. He says Franco Cortez put the knife against his neck, then took off. Witnesses confirmed the report. She's charged with Assault with a deadly weapon and Possession of Dirk or Dagger, both felonies. She was booked into jail Wednesday.

The Ukiah Planning Commission is considering a new cannabis dispensary on South State Street near Talmage Road. At their virtual meeting Wednesday, Jatinder Singh's application will be considered for a "major use and site development permit to allow operation of a cannabis retail/dispensary in a new building". He's proposing his business in the new building after demolition of two other buildings is done. The city planning staff reviewed it and passed it to the city's Design Review Board who unanimously recommended approval of the project to the Planning Commission.

Outcry to release some inmates at four of the state's juvenile jails due to the spread of coronavirus. There was an outbreak of the virus at the facilities, so some are asking the Governor's office to release some of the youth who have only six months left to go before their parole date, or if they have underlying medical conditions. 640 juveniles are in the facilities and a report says 175 recently tested positive for COVID. It's said to be the highest infection rate since the correctional institutions reported the first case in June of 2020. The hashtag #ProtectYouthNow has been trending on social media platforms the last several days.

Congressman Mike Thompson, Senator Diane Feinstein and several other congressional members have called on the Conference of Mayors to ban ghost guns. Congressman Thompson is the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force Chair. He and Feinstein and 39 of their colleagues are trying to get the mayors to make the untraceable firearms known as ghost guns totally illegal. They say shutting off the "supply of ghost guns is essential, and they also need a strong local response" due to the existing supply of ghost guns. The members say cities are starting to pass ordinances to prohibit the possession, purchase, sale, receipt, and transportation of ghost guns and are asking the Conference of Mayors to do the same.

Another COVID outbreak at the Mendocino County Jail. The Sheriff's Office notified there were over 60 cases in inmates, and several had recovered. They say some were released by courts and went home to isolate, but still there are 45 infected at the jail. The Sheriff's Dept. says to slow the spread at the jail, any incoming arrestees are being tested, then quarantined for 10 days. They've been testing the entire population at the facility twice a week and same for staff. The inmates in holding areas that are affected are being quarantined and some inmates getting close to their releases were let go sooner to decrease the population. Some staffers have also been infected, but all in all, the Sheriff's Dept. reports all cases have been mild.

01/24/22

A new report says Lake County is getting an economic boost from the legal cannabis industry. The Press Democrat reports a consultant for the industry who owns a farm near Lower Lake says they think the drug will be an economic driving force for the next half century. The paper also reports elected officials agree that it's been mostly positive. There are more jobs for farmworkers and growers and cannabis companies are buying local. The former board of supervisors chair Bruno Sabatier told the paper he believes growers contributed more than \$10 million dollars in taxes to the county over the past year.

The US Forest Service is taking the bull by the horns and trying a new approach to the wildfire crisis nationwide. The Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and Forest Service Chief Randy Moore are starting the strategy they say will protect communities and improve forest resilience. It includes more work to reduce forest fuels and forest health treatments because of the ever-increasing wildfire danger threatening millions of acres and multiple communities across the United States.

The state Attorney General Rob Bonta has announced the state is giving almost \$5 million dollars to 10 county sheriff's departments to help get illegal weapons off the street. The Sheriff's Dept.'s include Contra Costa, Lake, Sacramento, San Francisco and Santa Clara. The money through grant funding from the DOJ's Gun Violence Reduction Program. Bonta says the "California Department of Justice's Armed and Prohibited Persons System, or APPS" is going to be stronger with the close partnerships in these departments. He also encouraged more Sheriffs to apply.

A big rig that hit a utility pole in Lake County has caused quite the snarl on Highway 20. Mendo Fever reports it happened yesterday around lunchtime after a truck hauling hay crashed, dumping its load. It happened on the westbound lane south of Lucerne and blocked the highway. There was an hours long slowdown in the area. The news site reports, but it's not been confirmed, that video of the incident from a resident recorded high winds in the area at the time of the crash.

Lake County's once again taking up hundreds of tax defaulted properties. The Board of Supervisors will meet on the matter at their regular meeting tomorrow. It can be caught in person or online by local cable or on Facebook. Lake Co News reports, in an untimed item, during the session, a resolution will be presented to authorize the board chair to approve, then direct the tax collector to sell more than 900 properties at public auction. The news site reports this is one of the larger tax sales than before and minimum bids for the entire lot would garner nearly \$8 million dollars for the county.

Nearly 12 million dollars in grant money from the federal government is going to several Native American tribes, including a couple in Lake County. Lake Co News reports the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development announced the Indian Community Development Block Grant-American Rescue Plan funds for 11 tribes in California. The money comes from a larger pot for 74 tribal communities related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The news site reports it's third round of grants. The Big Valley Band of Pomo Indians is getting just over one million to build a medical facility and the Middletown Rancheria of Pomo is getting nearly an identical amount for their own medical services facility.



Since it's been so dry and bears have a hard time finding food late into fall, a welfare animal group is asking for a ban on black bear hunting temporarily in Calif. The Humane Society has filed a petition with the California Fish and Game Commission to hold off on the hunts, for now, until an assessment can be done to see if the state's black bear population is thriving. The agency sets state hunting regulations, but the Humane Society is asking for the state's upcoming bear season not to be held. It's supposed to start in late summer. The Fish and Wildlife Dept. says the black bear population IS healthy and there are tens of thousands of the animals in Calif. Nearly triple what it's been in recent decades.

The Ukiah Planning Commission is considering a permit for a quickie car oil change business. The staff report for Wednesday's meeting to allow a Major Use Permit on over 2,100 square feet for Valvoline on Airport Park Boulevard across the street from Costco, and next door to the new Holiday Inn Express. They are looking to build upstairs and downstairs, so mechanics can be underneath cars. They're also asking to put in three service bays and room for up to 12 vehicles behind the business and 13 parking spaces, plus a pedestrian walkway and other area improvements.

The Planning Commission meeting is scheduled to begin at 6 p.m. Jan. 26. T  
Or use these phone numbers: 1-669-900-9128 or 1-346-248-7799  
Or dial toll-free: 888-788-0099 or 833-548-0282  
Webinar ID: 912 6454 3193

There's a new member of the Willits City staff. They've hired Manuel Orozco as the city's Finance Director. At their last meeting, which was online only, the City Manager Brian Bender called Orozco, "a wonderful asset to this organization." They've also recently hired a few others in Community Development, a Dispatcher and at Public Works. The Mayor commented that she was happy there were applicants, despite the pandemic. There was other business too, on parking restrictions, painting curbs, to mark them, and the resolution to accept the end of a pavement project in the city.

The State of Calif. is trying to hire more Black teachers as reports say if Black students have at least one Black teacher as they grow up, they're more likely to graduate high school and go to college. The state Department of Education shows as of the last studied school year, 2018-19, under 4% of public school teachers in California, were Black. They counted about 12,000 total, but at the same time, there were 335,000 Black students, about 5.4% of the state's enrollment. The Gov. and lawmakers have set aside \$350 million in this year's budget for one-time grants to develop new or expand existing teacher residency programs, which is seen as one barrier, so was discrimination.

The unemployment rate has gone down a notch. In Lake County, Lake Co News reports it was off slightly in December, at the lowest level since the pandemic began. The state Employment Development Department reports Lake County's December unemployment rate was 5.7%, down .2% from November and a whopping 3 points lower than December 2020. The overall state rate was down .5% from 7% to 6.5% and way lower than the 9.3% it was in December 2020. Marin was the lowest in the state at 2.7%, and the highest was Imperial County at 14.7%. Mendocino was 4.6%, Sonoma,

01/25/22 3.5% and Napa was 4.1%.

A new report shows community colleges bring in a good chunk of California's economy. The report by Emsi Burning Glass, entitled The Economic Value of the California Community College System shows the schools account for over \$128 billion or 4.2% of California's total gross state product. There are over 115 colleges in the state and are amongst the largest employers. Payroll is \$8.5 billion and the schools pay \$4.2 billion on daily expenses. There are also almost 1.5 million jobs. The study from data back in the 2018-19 academic and financial reports from the college system and utilizing industry and employment data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and Census Bureau.

A special June election has been called for by the Lake County superintendent of schools for a seat on the Middletown Unified School District Board. It comes after outcry regarding the appointment to the seat. Lake Co News reports the Superintendent of Schools Brock Falkenberg said the Office of Education counted enough valid signatures from registered voters on a petition to trigger a special election for the board seat and to remove Annette Lee from the board after her provisional appointment. Lee was appointed with another new board member last month after two others left. Lee said she wanted more inclusive language for vaccine mandates for all points of view, then the petition started for her removal.

Even though Cal Fire said the Jackson Demonstration Forest was closed for logging operations, making it a danger for the public, some protestors showed up anyway. Yesterday the group, Forest Defenders were in one section, protesting what they say is the mismanagement of the forest and for previous citizens arrests. They were calling it "Safety First" in order to show illegal actions of a private security company. They say the cutting of an old forest of redwoods and douglas fir trees is more than what can be legally removed. And they say they're worried about another area, the Caspar 500 where they protested last summer.

Two more people in Mendocino County have died due to the coronavirus. The Public Health Dept. announced a 68 year old man from the North County area who was unvaccinated and had no comorbidities was the 112th death in the county; and the 113th was in a 77 year-old woman from the South Coast area; who was fully vaccinated and did have comorbidities.

[To find the nearest vaccine clinic in your area, please visit the Public Health](#)

A group is forming to provide support to women in Willits. Dr. Claudia Wenning formed to group for women to gather safely so they can discuss the events of the last two years since the pandemic started. The first Women's Circle is this Saturday at 5:30pm. And they're meeting bi-weekly at Quantum Level Health Studio four times. They have a large space and will be able to space out, masks are required and they'll have hand sanitizer and an air purifier.

For more information, call (707) 371-6104 or email [claudia@claudiawenning.com](mailto:claudia@claudiawenning.com).

A local Pomo band the Koi Nation is teaming up with another tribe, the Chickasaw Nation to build their dream casino near Windsor. Koi leaders announced a predevelopment deal with the Chickasaws, a tribe with many more members who already own 23 casinos in Oklahoma. The new agreement is for a partnership for the Koi's Shiloh Casino & Resort and the Chickasaws would also manage and operate the facility to include 2,500 gaming machines, a 200-room hotel, six restaurants and food service areas, a meeting center and spa.

Calif. Legislators are reportedly working on a new package of bills regarding the COVID19 vaccine. Lawmakers reportedly want to mandate everyone eligible in the state get vaccinated, and not allow any exemptions. Anti-vaccine activists are against the proposed package and are focusing on Democratic state Sen. Richard Pan of Sacramento, who's a pediatrician, and who has backed similar legislation after outbreaks of whooping cough and measles. Pan is drafting the new legislation. It's hard to say if it will move forward and land on the governor's desk, who's up for re-election this November, however he did order the covid vaccines be added to the list of required childhood immunizations.

Nurses who have tested positive for COVID19 are being allowed to work in nursing homes. The story from Cal Matters about severe worker shortages, which have only gotten worse due to the omicron strain of the virus. The state Dept. of Public Health is allowing infected healthcare workers to show up, if they have no symptoms. Where there are the worst staffing shortages, symptomatic staffers are allowed to work, but only with COVID patients. The latest report on nursing facility workers showed 11,500 were infected with COVID right now. 93% are fully vaccinated.

Caltrans has announced they'll start to use low-carbon cement to help reduce the carbon footprint of California's transportation system. The portland limestone cement (PLC) would mean the work Caltrans does for both road construction and maintenance would generate less carbon dioxide, which is the main greenhouse gas contributing to global warming and climate change. The agency says they'll be able to have the same high quality of work. They also say they expect the reduced energy needs for PLC production will keep the cost at around the same or slightly less when compared to regular cement.

At their latest meeting, the Cobb Area Council started their talks on fire season and efforts to try to stop recent tree mortality. The Record Bee reports the meeting was held online and District 5 Supervisor Jessica Pyska said she was thankful and hoped everyone tuning in was safe and well, adding county staff had been heavily impacted. She then spoke about the tree mortality issue which occurred last summer with the drought and underlying disease like beetle infestation. She then went on to say, later in the meeting, how folks needed to start hardening neighborhoods against fire and hazard trees and that the county would try to find money to help landowners. The next meeting is February 17th.

The state continues considering the early release of repeat offenders with serious and violent criminal histories. It comes after a judge reversed her own temporary restraining order. Over 2 dozen district attorneys challenged it saying it could mean domestic violence offenders, human traffickers, animal cruelty perpetrators and others would be out on the street. There are around 1,500 inmates in minimum-security facilities eligible to earn enough good conduct credits to lower the time they have by two-thirds instead of one-half.

A new report from the Marijuana Policy Project shows what each state with legal marijuana has earned on taxes since 2014. Colorado and Washington started retail sales of recreational cannabis back then. From all the states where it's legal, states reported a total together of \$10.4 billion in tax revenue, with over \$3 billion reported in 2021. Some states have not reported in their take for last year yet though, so it could be higher. There are 18 states with legal marijuana, but eight of those are over the last 2 years. Seven states haven't started collecting taxes. Since 2018, California

01/26/22 had earned well over 3 billion dollars in tax revenue.

The full report is available here: [mpp.org/cannabis-tax-revenue](https://mpp.org/cannabis-tax-revenue).

Congressman Jared Huffman is reintroducing his legislation to identify, restore and protect salmon rivers and watersheds nationwide. Huffman's the Chair of the House Subcommittee on Water, Oceans and Wildlife and the Co-Chair of the Congressional Wild Salmon Caucus. He says the legislation eyes the "ecological, cultural, and economic importance of salmon" which he reminds support tens of thousands of jobs, sustains fishing communities, generates billions of dollars in economic activity, and provides food for millions of people. And they hold immense cultural significance for Tribes. Congressman Mike Thompson is a sponsor of the legislation.

The Save the Redwoods League along with the InterTribal Sinkyone Wilderness Council are partnering again to protect coastal redwoods in the tribal territory on the Lost Coast. The League has purchased 523-acres which had previously been called Andersonia West. The buy to permanently protect and watch over the area for the Sinkyone who they then transferred the land to. In return the Sinkyone Council granted the League a conservation easement.

After a traffic stop last November, a Deputy found 33 year old Craig Lent in possession of fentanyl, heroin, methamphetamine, and LSD and items to deal the drugs in Lakeport. He was stopped again January 10th for traffic violations and found with guns and believed to be under the influence. Deputies with search warrants the next day found more firearms and fentanyl again, so he was arrested and held in the Lake County Jail. The Sheriff's Dept. reports the guy had over 60 grams of fentanyl from the first traffic stop and the search warrants, plus a bunch of heroin, loads of meth, and multiple firearms.

Caltrans is studying several alternate routes to Highway 37 due to rising sea levels. The agency is also studying alternative modes of transportation for motorists who regularly travel the 21-mile corridor through Marin, Sonoma, Napa and Solano counties. A public meeting included presentations on potential routes or alignments, which officials said were not concrete. They were also asking for feedback as the study is said to be in its infancy. They say they're looking for a solution proactively for an issue that may occur in the future, considering parts of Highway 37 could be "completely inundated" by 2050.

Still no favorite to change the name of the City of Fort Bragg by a group assigned to the task. After almost 1 ½ years, a citizen commission considering whether or not to dump the slaveholder's name have not been able to reach consensus. Their final presentation showed they did come up with several alternatives, but there was no final agreement on a new name. They did however suggest rededicating the town to a different Bragg without the general's background, but that too, was not a sale. The commission was appointed in the summer of 2020 as the country reeled from anti-racism protests amidst the backdrop of the pandemic.

We could be seeing a descension down the mountain of omicron fueled coronavirus cases. The state is apparently seeing a sign of a lull as infection rates and hospital stays are waning. The State's latest projection model showed more than 15,000 people in the hospital with coronavirus, half what was anticipated. And the data also showed positivity rates down 15%. Hospitalizations were also down 50% to lower than 7,700. Public health experts say that ICU stays have not yet peaked though, so we could see about 3,000 ICU patients in the next week.

A man from Sonoma County accused of killing another man in Lucerne last summer has pleaded not guilty. Nova Maye Deperno of Occidental is accused in the murder of 63-year-old Ronald Meluso who was reported missing last August. Then last month the Lake County Sheriff's Office reported they thought there was foul play involved in the disappearance and called Deperno a person of interest. He was arrested last week and charged with several felonies. They also say Deperno showed them where the body was located, off Bartlett Springs Road in northern Lake County. Meluso died from a gunshot and Deperno has been charged in the case and for four other felonies. He's held without bail and faces 25 years to life in prison.

The sale of hundreds of tax defaulted properties in Lake County is moving forward. Yesterday the Board of Supervisors was considering the move for this spring. There are over 900 parcels set to go up for auction now. Lake Co News reports the Treasurer-Tax Collector Barbara Ringen presented a resolution to approve the sale of 942 tax defaulted properties. That's like 3 times what the agency has presented in the past. But there's been a push for more after the City of Clearlake demanded thousands get sold and sued to get it done. The city even went to the state to spur the sales. The sale of these 942 properties will be online from May 27th to June 1st.

A woman accused of killing the passenger in her car due to a drunk driving crash in Lucerne is being charged with vehicular manslaughter. 30 year old Justin Dale died in the crash Sunday and Patricia Murphy, the driver, is being charged in the case. The prosecutor's office says Murphy was driving a 2012 Volkswagen and rear-ended a parked Ram 550 work truck on Highway 20. Dale died and Murphy had minor injuries. The CHP arrested Murphy for DUI after the crash. She was arraigned yesterday and is held without bail.

The Gov. Gavin Newsom, Senate President pro Tempore Toni Atkins and Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon say they have money to make sure people who get sick with COVID can take time off work and get paid leave. The money from the state as part of an agreement so employees can get supplemental paid sick leave through Sept. 30th. This is part of the Governor's budget. Other early moves, restoring business tax credits, research and development credit and net operating losses, limited during the COVID-19 Recession; tax relief for those who got grants for restaurants and closed venues; and more money for the Small Business Covid-19 Relief Grant Program.

The Sheriff is out of work with COVID19. Mendocino County Sheriff Matt Kendall says he's isolating at home for the week after he tested positive. He says his symptoms are a scratchy throat and a positive COVID test. He said he's announcing it, because it's nothing to be ashamed of. Undersheriff Darren Brewster and Captain Greg Van Patten are currently leading the department in person as the jail is also dealing with an outbreak. Kendall says others are out with the virus too. He says most have mild symptoms, like him. He has also publicly acknowledged he is fully vaccinated, including a booster shot, wears masks when he has to and still got infected.

01/27/22

Pacific, Gas & Electric is offering those impacted by wildfires last summer free removal of large-diameter wood taken from trees felled during its wildfire response. When crews were out inspecting areas hit by wildfires and cut down dead or dying or hazardous trees, they left debris behind. The work is almost done so the utility is offering residents safe removal of the debris from their properties, if it's safe to do so. It's for those impacted by several area fires including the Cache, Dixie, Hopkins, KNP Complex and McFarland Fires, plus many others.

The Governor's announced changes to the nation's first ever earthquake alert system. Newsom announced new functionality in the MyShake app so that Californians and communities can feel safe. The app was funded by the Governor's Office of Emergency Services and developed by the UC Berkeley Seismology Lab. It now includes an enhancement called HomeBase to allow users to set a default location to get earthquake early warning alerts. All app users have to do within the app is go to their settings page and see the new "Add HomeBase Location" button and click it. The app also now includes a tone before a verbal warning, if there's a Tsunami alert, also on the settings page.

The state Attorney General is warning about a new COVID scam. Atty. General Rob Bonta says this time it's phony testing locations and websites. Bonta says as cases of the virus have surged once again, testing sites got overwhelmed with many infected waiting in hours long lines and getting delayed or untimely results. And at home tests are practically impossible to get your hands on. Bonta says scammers took advantage and set up illegitimate COVID-19 testing companies and clinics. He says they're not sure how many may still be operating.

Another Sherwood Firewise Communities meeting has been held, this time on Zoom due to the virus. Third District Supervisor John Haschak gave an update for those at the meeting for the County Service Area #3 benefit zone, and there was someone at the meeting from a fire hardening company to give some tips. Then the three working groups for Firewise's also shared updates. Hashak commented on an Emergency Access Route out of the Brooktrails area that was used heavily last summer during the Oak Fire.

For more information, visit [sherwoodfirewise.org](http://sherwoodfirewise.org). The volunteer run organization is always in need of more volunteers. The next quarterly meeting will be April 14.

Another Zoom meeting for the Willits Unified School District board. The board met two weeks ago, discussing the impact the virus continues to have on the school district. The Superintendent Joe Aldridge reported around 10 percent of school staff was hit by the virus or quarantining. And that they're following state and county health orders. He said staffing had been challenging and is just trying to keep the schools opened and safe. And thanked staff for showing up. And the School Board President Robert Chavez said he was concerned about teacher burnout, a refrain we're hearing nationwide.

One of the interim public health officers in Lake County's urging the community to stay away from large gatherings as he thinks there will be a local surge over the next month. Lake Co News reports, Dr. Charlie Evans, who had helped Public Health in the past, joined the new Health Services Director Jonathan Portney at the Board of Supervisors meeting Tuesday for the latest COVID report. Evans says the state has reached the plateau for omicron cases, but Lake and other rural areas are seeing rising case numbers. Right now, Dr. Evans says, Lake County has a 27.5% positivity rate, the highest since the beginning of the pandemic, at 89.4 cases per 100,000. There are 8 people in the hospital as of Monday.

The Governor keeps giving peaks of his new budget, and now a new \$10 billion zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) package. Gov. Newsom says the future is electric and the state needs to make it easier and less expensive to go there. He says that means more help for residents to buy clean cars and to put up more charging stations across the state to eliminate the state's dependence on oil and prove it can be done, to the entire world. The ZEV package would mean all electric by 2035.

There's a proposal for a large Monarch butterfly mural in Ukiah in the city's plaza. The Daily Journal reports the artist Danza Davis, is a Mendocino County native living in Potter Valley. The project would show a large Monarch butterfly, caterpillar and cocoon on a blank wall in the Alex R. Thomas Jr. Plaza downtown. The mayor is championing the idea, joining others nationwide, the paper reports, to "raise awareness and encourage preservation of the Monarch Butterfly." Then the Ukiah City Council adopted the Mayors Monarch Pledge. The city's Design Review Board will take up the matter at their meeting this afternoon.

Congressman Jared Huffman working with colleagues in the House and Senate to get the Commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service to move swiftly releasing the latest tax guidance to help wildfire victims with claims from the Fire Victim Trust. The \$13.5 billion settlement from PG&E after the 2015 Butte Fire, the 2017 North Bay Wildfire storm and the 2018 Camp Fire. The money started to get handed out in November 2020, and then more by the end of 2021, so this may be the first year victims are taxed. Huffman says he's calling on the IRS for expedience in the matter so victims can file their taxes on time and with confidence.

The Mendocino County Sheriff's Office reporting to a property in the town of Whitehorn for a dead body. The Sheriff's office reports the body was at a marijuana garden. The 42 year old man was reportedly dead for several days before Deputies found him, and they say there were no signs of foul play that stood out. The dept. also says a landlord on the property found the body saying their tenant had been living in "unkempt and had unhealthy conditions." His family was being notified before the man's name was released and the coroner was also investigating the cause of death with an autopsy.

CHP is investigating a crash on Highway 101 near Bell Springs. Mendofever.com reported that the driver of a big rig called 9 1 1 just after 6:00 this morning about a pickup truck over the bank and into the water. Responders were able to get the pickup driver out. He was airlifted to the hospital. There is no word on his condition. The Northbound lanes were closed as crews pulled the truck out of the water. The roadway has since been reopened.

01/28/22

PG&E is offering free removal of large diameter wood from trees that were cut down during the 2021 wildfire season. The utility says most of the hazardous trees have been cut down, so it will help get rid of them for safety reasons. The work is optional. Because the wood is the landowner's property, landowners must provide written permission to PG&E to have the wood removed. PG&E is in the process of reaching out to impacted landowners to offer the removal services and getting the permission forms out to landowners impacted.

The California Employment Development Department says 98 percent of the more than 345,000 suspicious disability claims it pulled last month are frauds. The state froze those claims last month and reviewed them. There were 27,000 medical providers involved, and less than 500 have proven their claims are legitimate so far. The EDD figures it has paid out more than 20 billion dollars in bogus claims since the pandemic started. That crackdown on fraudulent claims has left many true claims unpaid. The department says it is working to clear those applicants for benefits.

The Mendocino County Cannabis Program is hosting three webinars this month. The sessions will provide information about the program and what it offers. You can find out when and where by going to the county website and following the community link.

California lawmakers will take up a bill that encourages local school districts to work with native American tribes in their communities to develop teaching materials that reflect tribal knowledge and perspectives. Assembly member James Ramos sponsored the bill. He says students need to learn about the diversity of California's more than 100 recognized tribes. It has the backing of the California Department of Education and more than 600 individuals and 28 organizations. The bill would also require school districts to compare the achievements of native American students and their non-native peers and take steps to close any gaps between the two groups. Ramos is the only Native American member of the California Legislature.

We've lost another Mendocino County resident to COVID-19. The county's Public Health Dept. reports an 80 year-old man from the North Coast area was the 114th person to die from the virus locally. Public health officials say the man was fully vaccinated with comorbidities.

[To find the nearest vaccine clinic in your area, please visit the Public Health v](#)

Sonoma County Public Health says now that the omicron surge is quieting some, they're going to loosen some restrictions on indoor public gatherings and large events. The Press Democrat reports the county's calling the changes, clarifications. So now the ban on indoor public events is capped at 50 people on the sidelines or in attendance at sports games, concerts and performing arts shows. The cap of 100 people for outdoor events, stays. There were loads of complaints about the restrictions, thus the changes. County officials say they're aware there were stumbles in how they communicated the restrictions a few weeks ago.

Wondering why your cell service is nil... Eight cellphone towers are off. The Mendocino County Sheriff's Office confirmed Verizon reporting the outage yesterday which was affecting phone and internet service in Hopland and Lake County. Crews were working on the repairs last night, but there was no indication when the work would be complete.

A new jobs program aimed at younger folks has been launched in the state. The \$185 million program for disadvantaged youth and young adults, the Californians For All Youth Jobs Corps. The money comes from the Governor's 2021-22 "California Comeback Plan." The first chunk of money, \$150 million will go to 13 large cities. The rest to smaller counties and cities who will compete for the cash. It's over a two year span for those 16 to 30 years old get jobs in underserved and underemployed populations. The idea so they can gain meaningful career experience while on a path to help their communities on local priorities.

A car that was inside a Caltrans building on Lake Mendocino Drive has caught fire. The report yesterday and that the building's sprinkler system did go on. Firefighters reported the fire was out pretty quick.

There's a new CEO in town. After Mendocino County CEO Carmel Angelo announced her early retirement, her deputy will take the reins. Angelo will be out by March 19th and the Board of Supervisors voted this week, unanimously, to appoint the Assistant CEO, Darcie Antle as Interim CEO, effective March 20th. Antle has been the Assistant for less than a year, starting last May. She was however, the Deputy CEO from 2017 to last year and is also the Disaster Recovery Finance Director. Before working for the county, Antle was the Regional Director of Operations for the Northern California Network of Adventist Health and the California Medical Group for Mendocino, Lake, and Sonoma counties.



Police in Clearlake asking for the public's help locating a runaway. Police say Kaytie Lemons may be seen in Central Calif., around the area of Merced, Modesto, and Chowchilla. They ask if anyone knows where she is or sees her to please call police.

Lake County has given approval for a new substance abuse treatment center, only for women. Hilltop Recovery Services' new Hilltop for Women Leandra's House got the green light from the Planning Commission for its major use permit on Jan. 13th. It will be located in a former home, remodeled for the facility on 20 acres in Clearlake Oaks. Lori Carter-Runyon and her husband, Ryan have been trying to get the place zoned as a treatment center since 2020. They're planning a 20 bed facility across from Hilltop Recovery's inpatient residential treatment center for men, which the same couple bought in 2015 on five acres. It houses 32 residents.

A man from Lakeport accused of murdering his stepmom has pleaded no contest. Matthew Mora reportedly ran from the scene after 56-year-old Christine Mora was found dead one year ago. Witnesses say Matthew was the shooter and that he was drunk and arguing with family members at the time. Deputies found him at a nearby hotel and he was held without bail ever since. As part of a settlement in the case, the court accepted the deal, now he awaits sentencing.

A new senior apartment complex in Ukiah is open for business. Residents got to move into their new homes on West Gobbi Street after some minor construction delays. The residents got to move in last month after a temporary certificate of occupancy was granted. The owner just has to install a fire ladder to the roof to get the permanent certificate and other minor things. The Temporary Certificate is only valid until Tuesday, but an extension is possible. There are 31 affordable apartments that went up with state funding. The project first approved in 2018.

A bill in the Legislature would require all kids in the state of California to complete a year of kindergarten before going into first grade. The bill already passed the state Senate and heads to the Assembly next. About 95% of California schoolkids do go to kindergarten according to the state Department of Education, but it is not, however, mandatory. If the new bill becomes law it would only apply to public schools. It would start this fall. Incoming first-graders would have to have one year of kindergarten under their belt and be 6 years old by Sept. 1st. Some home-school advocates are reportedly opposing the bill. A similar bill passed in 2014, but then Governor Jerry Brown veto'd it.

Nearly 70,000 COVID tests have arrived in Mendocino County. The Public Health Dept. reported getting the rapid tests last week. They say the so-called Nucleic Acid Amplification tests (NAAT) are more sensitive than the Binx tests so many of us have used already. They show the results in about twenty minutes. These are the tests provided by the Federal government and will be distributed to Clinics, Skilled Nursing Facilities, and the Mendocino County Office of Education. They can also detect the omicron variant in smaller concentrations, which might be missed by an antigen test.

01/31/22

To order the tests, please visit: <https://www.covidtests.gov/>

Call Public Health with any questions or support needed for COVID isolation, at

707-472-2759. Visit <http://www.mendocinocounty.org/covid19> for more info.

A man has been arrested in Ukiah after a police officer on routine traffic patrol saw a car with an equipment violation. On Friday night the cop found five people in the car and said someone in the front seat was seen dropping something on the ground. A backup officer arrived and noticed it looked like there was a weapon under the passenger door of the vehicle, so both officers pulled out their guns. Then more backup showed up from the police dept., CHP, and MCSO. Everyone in the car was ordered out and detained. One firearm was secured, it was a ghost gun. There was also ammo found in the gun. The passenger in the front seat, a 16 year old, was arrested and taken to Juvenile Hall after being medically cleared due to the COVID-19 protocol.

After a traffic stop in Willits for expired registration tags, a man was arrested for several crimes. After police tried to stop the guy early yesterday morning, he took off on Hwy 20, reaching speeds up to 80 mph. The cop stopped following for their own safety, then Deputies picked up the search for the driver and saw the car near a wooded area. The car was towed, but before that Jesse Davenport was found in the car. He had a warrant for his arrest and a suspended license, so he was arrested. He was also found with meth on him and was further charged for felony evading, bringing drugs to jail, being in possession of drugs and paraphernalia and for his outstanding warrant.

A driver has been killed in Lake County after a solo car crash on Highway 20. Mendo Fever reports the single-vehicle accident happened this weekend near the Cache Creek Wilderness. The California Highway Patrol reported the vehicle “flipped down [an] embankment” on the east side of the highway with someone inside. Crews were working to pull the car back up out of the embankment.

Inmates in the Mendocino County jail reportedly complaining to local reporters about the outbreak of COVID at the facility, the quarantine protocols and losing some privileges. The Red Headed Blackbelt site reports they spoke to a couple of inmates inside about protesting after their whole unit was on lockdown without outdoor time, instead of showers they got baby wipes and more. The inmate said if anyone tested positive they were put in a quarantine module, but inmates have been protesting the situation, asking for positive inmates to stay in with the rest of the population and just let the virus “run its course.” Many stayed in their cells to protest, and others started a hunger strike. Another inmate said he couldn’t call his lawyer before a court appearance. The news site reported a similar story at the Humboldt County jail last month.

An appeal in the case of the woman accused of abusing, the now infamous, “Thunder the Wonder Dog” was struck down. The Mendocino County District Attorney David Eyster felt the sentence was not enough for Thunder, the German Shepard’s owner Katie Rhiannon Smith who neglected, botched killing the dog, and left it alone in the woods. She got unsupervised probation of 36 months, no jail time, counseling, no animals while on probation and 500 hours of community service. The DA appealed the sentence, but has now lost the appeal, citing a conservative attitude toward lower court decisions, presuming the lower court’s decision was correct.

An elderly man has been reported missing outside Hopland. Mendo Fever reports search crews were looking for the man off Mountain House Road south of Hopland. The news site reported he had dementia and described what he was wearing. There were several deputy vehicles in the area, and the Hopland Fire Department was also on scene. And a helicopter from Sonoma County was called too as temperatures were hovering around freezing. The man was eventually found and searchers were headed his way with an ambulance.

It's been nearly four years since Khadijah Britton vanished from Covelo and a vigil is planned to mark the solemn occasion. The FBI, local law enforcement and volunteers have searched for her ever since she was last seen February 18th of 2018. There's also a reward for any information that leads to information on where she may be and an arrest for anyone involved. This Saturday afternoon, there's an online prayer vigil at 1 p.m. on Zoom. Britton's case is one of many of Mendocino and North Coast residents whose cases have gone cold. But the Mendocino County Sheriff's Office says they're still working the case. The \$85,000 reward is still in play as well as another \$25,000 for info leading to a conviction and arrest.

Lake County Board of Supervisors poised to table cannabis taxes. Lake Co News reports the board, who's meeting on Zoom, is considering a resolution after multiple requests from cannabis businesses at the board meeting last week not to take cannabis tax payments from Jan. 31st to May 15th. And to hold off on late payment fines during the same period, and further, to hold off on tax rate increases based on the consumer price index until 2024. Cannabis business owners across the state have been struggling and the Governor's office and lawmakers have also been looking at the issue.

The state unemployment department reports still dealing with fraudulent applicants. It's been nearly two years since the state locked down and businesses had to close due to the pandemic and the Employment Development Department reported flagging suspicious disability insurance claims. The agency also said last week as many as 98% of 27,000 medical providers connected to the claims were fake. They reported less than 500 providers could provide verification of their identity. The dept. has not said how much it may have paid out for bogus claims. They are also asking 1.4 million who got federal pandemic unemployment benefits to prove they were eligible or pay the money back, with a large fine.

The Little Lake Fire Protection District is in their new station. Firefighters moved in a couple of weeks ago to Firehouse 54, in Willits. They have two paid firefighters and 36 volunteer firefighters, none stay overnight currently. If that should change, they can. They have four dorm rooms, one of which is ADA compliant, and a commercial kitchen. They also have some new gear, training room and furniture and a conference room, which they can also use as a mini-Emergency Operations Center.

The highest bridge in the state had to be closed down after an abandoned car was left there. A sheriff's deputy was investigating the car near the Foresthill Bridge near the town of Auburn last Thursday, and found a note on the windshield, then he started having chest pains. The Placer County Sheriff's Office didn't say what the note said, but the deputy was apparently told not to go near the car, because of a hazardous substance inside. A Hazmat crew was called along with several fire departments. They found a window broken and a person dead inside the car. It had been filled with hydrogen sulfide gas. The area cordoned off and the deputy who first arrived was treated at the hospital, but fine after.

The Governor has placed a death penalty moratorium in place since he's been in office and is now reportedly trying to get rid of the United States' largest death row altogether. Newsom looking to move the condemned inmates to other prisons within two years from San Quentin State Prison and turn it into something with a better vibe. He called the prison system deeply flawed. He says ending up on death row has more to do with your

02/01/22 wealth or race then guilt or innocence.

Ukiah Police are looking for participants to join their Security Camera Registry Program. The dept. says you too can help fight crime by working with the agency if you have a security camera system that records. The police department is looking to partner with businesses and residents to compile a list of surveillance camera systems to enhance crime prevention and public safety. All personal information gathered is for official use only. They say video surveillance is one of the best methods to catch criminals and convict suspects caught in the act of committing a crime.

[To register your video security system, please complete the registration form](#)

We've lost three more people to coronavirus in Mendocino County. The three were older men. The 115th death was a 92 year-old man from the Ukiah area; vaccinated with comorbidities. The 116th, an unvaccinated 76 year-old man from the South Coast area. And the 117th death was in an 80 year-old man from the North Coast area, who was vaccinated with comorbidities.

We've gathered more information on reports of a missing man in the Hopland area we told you about. The Mendocino County Sheriff's Dept. reports getting a call from the Hopland Fire Department Sunday about a missing 67 year-old man whose spouse called when he didn't return from a hike on their property. They found out he had multiple health conditions including dementia. A search was conducted but the man couldn't be found, so the Search and Rescue Team was called along with the CHP for an aerial search. The man was found by the helicopter after only ten minutes in a remote area. They say he was exhausted and disoriented, but otherwise in good health and had no injuries.

A man from Ukiah has been arrested after patrol Deputies recognized him from previous contacts, saw him walking down the street. Marcelino Anguiano was wanted for several crimes and had several warrants for his arrest, all felonies. He was detained, then arrested and held on \$65,000.00 bail. The crimes included, vandalism, evading and going the wrong way on a highway and violation of probation.

A man in Covelo's been arrested after reports of a domestic violence incident. The Sheriff's Office reports getting a call that a suspect had some sort of self-induced medical emergency and was in his backyard. They say when they arrived, medical personnel were there dealing with the situation involving Robert Nelson. Deputies say a female victim said she and Nelson, her husband, were in an argument and he was putting his hands on her face, trying to suffocate her and grabbed her by the hair, pulled her to the ground and again tried to suffocate her using his hands to cover her mouth and nose. She got away, but he continued to assault her. Nelson was arrested after getting out of an ambulance and being combative with a Round Valley Tribal officers. He fought deputies too, who finally handcuffed him and took him to jail where he was held on \$25,000.00 bail.

The Casper 500 logging operation in the Jackson Demonstration Forest that's been protested on and off, could be back on. Cal Fire is announcing their Community Tours of the Caspar 500 Timber Harvest Plan. They have walks planned and are looking to dialogue with the community about the harvest and also to get ideas from the community. It's happening next Friday from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m, February 11th, again on Friday, February 25th, and on March 12th and March 29th. There will be driving and walking to different locations within the plan area for discussion. Rain or shine, the tours are on.

A plea agreement for a former bike shop owner in Lakeport accused of possession of child pornography has been tossed by the judge. Judge Shanda Harry said no to an agreement for Jeffery Scott Cramer to get probation and instead says she's sending the 60 year old to prison for two years. He was arrested in May of 2020 after search warrants at his home and former business, Main Street Bicycles, turned up child pornography. He was then charged in the case later that year and pleaded no contest in exchange for a plea deal, which is now likely void. Sentencing guidelines are for at least a year and a half in prison. He's due back in court February 15th for formal sentencing.

The amount of people dying in California from the coronavirus spiking again. As of the latest data released, there's been a 300% increase in the last month in the amount of people dying each day. As of last Thursday, the state was seeing 157 COVID deaths a day. It's aligning with most other data, that cases surge then about 3-4 weeks later, so do the deaths. But the chance of people dying now is much less than it was when the pandemic first started in the first quarter of 2020. That's due to vaccinations. And nationwide, the deaths have hit more than 2,200/day.

Mendocino College has announced their new Physical Therapist Assistant program has received full accreditation status. The Dean of Career Education for the college says the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education granted the status in December, at the same time their first cohort finished the program. The school reports being the first in the state to partner with another Community College (Shasta), where they share instructors in a hybrid model.

The Clearlake City Council is discussing supporting a possible rural regional energy network. At their meeting this week, the council's going to discuss supporting the plan for the Lake Area Planning Council going after a rural regional energy network, or RuralREN, program in Lake County. Lake Co News reports the city manager will report on the plan to the council Thursday about how it could be a solution for energy efficient programs the California Public Utilities Commission had previously considered. The council will also consider a development agreement for a cannabis operation in Clearlake.

Two kids getting into a fight ends with one pulling a knife and stabbing the other. Willits police say the two teenagers got into it after the victim went to get his cellphone from his ex-girlfriend and the new boyfriend was with her. This is according to the victim's mom. She says the boys started to fight near the Little League fields, when the suspect pulled out a "retractable knife" and cut and stabbed the other boy who ended up in the hospital. He got help from Willits Charter School. His mom says he had two superficial stab wounds, one of which was just millimeters away from his intestine. Police say the victim was acting in self defense after spotting the knife. They're apparently speaking to the suspect.

Need some shade? The City of Ukiah may be able to help. The Community Foundation of Mendocino County has a "Releaf Tree Planting Fund" where they pay for native trees to be planted to help shade the sidewalk and street and bring down the overall heat in the city. Property owners in selected areas get a free tree which city staff plant for you. It has a "tree gator" watering pouch. You would have to officially "adopt" the tree and agree to water it through its watering pouch once or twice per month.

If you are a City of Ukiah resident and are interested in planting a tree on your property, please contact Marianne Davison at [mdavison@cityofukiah.com](mailto:mdavison@cityofukiah.com).

Intro: Supporters of single-payer, government-funded healthcare in California say they'll continue fighting after Assembly Bill 1400 was pulled Monday for lack of votes. The bill would have allowed people to ditch their private insurance, something opponents say amounts to a government takeover and would require big tax increases. But Assemblymember Ash Kalra, the main author of the bill, says the high costs in the existing, private-insurance system put coverage out of reach for many low-income families.

02/02/22

:16 "Currently, California families and businesses spend over \$220 billion a year out of their pocket for healthcare. And so, even the taxation mechanisms that were introduced, the reality is that costs would go down for the average Californian family and business."

Tag: The bill looked to create a "Medicare-for-all" type system to guarantee affordable healthcare for all Californians and give the state leverage to negotiate lower rates from providers. To pay for it – the bill would have raised taxes on high-earning businesses and large employers, add a payroll tax on those making around 50-thousand and progressive income taxes on people making more than 149-thousand 500 dollars a year.

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Second Cut: Neonatal I-C-U Nurse Catherine Kennedy, a president of the California Nurses Association, says Americans of all income levels deserve comprehensive health care.

:09 "We don't give up. I mean, this is really about healthcare being a human right. It's a groundswell, and we are going to make this happen."

Tag: Advocacy groups say they will keep building support for a single-payer system, and try again once a new Legislature is seated after the November election.

You may hear some warning sirens in Lake County as the Sheriff's Office is doing a full length test. The test next Monday will be heard in Middletown, Anderson Springs, Cobb, Loch Lomond, and Kelseyville Riviera (formerly known as the Clear Lake Riviera). It'll go three minutes. If there were a real emergency, the warning siren is a way the community will know there's danger from something like a wildfire, earthquake, or other hazard. They test them the first Monday of every month at 11:00 am. Every year in February they run a full three-minute activation.

A plan to acquire the old PG&E power plant in Mendocino County to keep flows of Eel River water flowing into Lake Mendocino and the Russian River may be in trouble. Sonoma, Humboldt and Mendocino counties have reportedly decided not to pursue taking over the old Potter Valley hydroelectric plant because they can't get a federal license application done in time for the April 14th deadline. PG&E announced it would surrender its license before the pandemic and after its Chapter 11 bankruptcy. Users downstream have said they need the plant to stay online to be sure the Eel River water gets diverted.

COVID recovery funds from the federal government being used in Lakeport will cover a loss of revenue. That's the word from the Lakeport City Council at their meeting yesterday after looking over a list of projects eligible for COVID-related money. Lake Co News reports the Assistant City Manager Nick Walker presented some projects and asked for councilmembers to come up with a spending plan, then tell staff what to do with the \$1.2 million. The City Manager Kevin Ingram also said city staff might look at a list of projects and what they would cost, then bring that back to the council.

The name of a woman who died in a single car crash on Highway 20, has been released. The Lake County Sheriff's Office reported 23 year old Lily Ann Richey was killed in the crash last Sunday after her vehicle was found in a creek bed off the highway east of Walker Ridge. They say they believe she veered to the right, hit an embankment, crossed to the other side of the highway and traveled down the embankment into a creek bed.

Local art lovers attended the latest Willits City Council meeting in big numbers. The meeting on zoom featured the council all choosing to adopt the resolution to authorize the installation of a pinwheel sculpture in Highway 20 Park. The sculpture is being created by artist Cjay Roughgarden and is being donated to the city by Jane Camp. The City Manager told the council its installation would be about \$3,000. City staff will help get the sculpture put up which will take two to three days.

During a Zoom protest of wildfire survivors and advocates they discussed how Pacific Gas & Electric got their safety certificate renewed for the year. Some on the meeting said that was a "license to burn" for the utility company who they say will now allow the utility to use money from a multi-billion dollar state wildfire fund to pay the victims of fires. PG&E is being granted this year's certificate which lasts a year. But a press release with the announcement from the Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety says it doesn't necessarily mean the utility took all necessary steps to stop its equipment from causing fires, nor does the certificate shield the company from litigation or liability.

A group who has wanted to get an initiative on the November ballot for new dams in the state, and desalination plants and other large water projects says they're ending their work on the project. The campaign said they couldn't get enough petition signatures or funding for the issue which they say could have helped solve the state's chronic and continued water scarcity. The campaign also noted even though there was more than 70% support from voters for increased state spending on water infrastructure, the campaign couldn't get the necessary finances to back their effort of gathering 1 million signatures.

Another \$50,000 has been set aside by the Mendocino County Fire Safe Council for a Fire Safety Micro-Grant Program. The Council says the grants will go directly to organizations who continue to work on improving wildfire preparedness and resilience around the county. They will be distributed through Neighborhood Fire Safe Councils they're affiliated with, along with fire districts or fire departments in Mendocino County. The grant applications are being considered for smaller projects in the \$2,000 to \$6,000 range. Only one application is allowed per organization. The deadline to apply is March 1st.

More information can be found on the MCFSC website at <https://firesafemendocino.org/micro-grant-program>, or you may contact MCFSC directly with questions or to receive the Guidelines and Application Form: [emily@firesafemendocino.org](mailto:emily@firesafemendocino.org) or 707-486-9838.

02/03/22 One person is dead and several others have been injured after a shooting on a Greyhound bus in Northern California. Police say they arrested the attacker at a nearby Walmart last night in Oroville. They say they had a bunch of 911 calls around 7:30 p.m. about a shooting in a bus outside an am/pm mini-market in Oroville. The Butte County Sheriff's Office reports deputies along with Oroville police officers found multiple people shot. One of them had died at the scene and the shooter ran off before they got there. He was found inside the Walmart nearby. The Mayor of Oroville posted on Facebook five people were shot.

The drought continues in Calif. as snow totals for the year come in so far. Water in the snow is lower than the historical average for January as there hasn't been a lot of snow or rain. Completely the opposite of December where we got hammered with rain. The state Department of Water Resources says the snowpack in the Sierra Nevada mountains was at 92% of what's normal for this date. In December, it was 162% though. The head of the agency's dept. of snow surveys and water supply forecasting said the climate is experiencing volatile shifts from wet to dry year after year, and month after month.

A woman from Fort Bragg has been arrested after reports of a stolen car. The victim called police in Ukiah saying his car was stolen from in front of his house as he left it running to warm up. Police found it within ten minutes of the call near Hopland. A detective in an unmarked car followed and other marked cars stopped the vehicle. The driver was identified as Bailey Blunt. Police say she had suspected methamphetamine and a meth pipe, plus she was on Post Release Community Supervision (PRCS) and had a bunch of warrants out for her arrest. She can now add possession of a stolen vehicle to the list, along with violation of the probation and possessing drugs and paraphernalia.

The 2020 Lake County Crop Report looks something like it did years ago. Lake Co news reports the 2020 report was given to the Board of Supervisors at the end of last year. A new Agricultural Commissioner and Sealer of Weights And Measures takes over too as the report shows the value of crops for the 2020 year was down 30% from 2019. The report matching up to a level not seen since 2011, which the retiring ag commissioner said was the result of market forces impacting the winegrape, walnut and timber industries, along with the continuing drought which impacted field crops and cattle industries.

A lawmaker trying to curb school shootings says he wants to gather information from gun-owning parents. State Senator Anthony Portantino plans to introduce a bill to require parents to notify schools about guns in their home and answer questions about their storage. The bill would also allow authorities to search through a student's property, including their backpack, locker, or vehicle, if the student is suspected of having a gun. Portantino said the bill is in response to the fatal shooting at Oxford High School in Michigan.

A new report shows distance learning in the early days of the COVID19 pandemic affected learning in the long run in Calif. Ed Source reports parents across the state say they're concerned about the continued school interruptions with hybrid, in person and virtual learning. Experts in early childhood, say it's increasing bad behavior, that they're more prone to act out or experience anxiety, sadness or depression during distance learning. They say it becomes a challenge for kids to focus on academics, deepening learning loss and putting a strain on their families.



A single car crash has been reported in Willits. The California Highway Patrol reported the crash happened yesterday near Brown's Corner when a black truck rolled on the road, but nobody was injured. A tow truck came to the scene. Mendo Fever reported there were conflicting accounts that the truck overturned or was just on the side of the road disabled after.

The Lake County Sheriff will be the auctioneer at the next Lake County Wine Auction. The Sheriff Brian Martin said community organizations are a "major component in delivering much needed services and programs" and that he's looking forward to participating in the 2022 fundraiser. Last year they were able to raise \$250,000 for local organizations and the five county high schools. The event this year is Sept. 17th at the Mercantile by Shannon Family of Wines in Kelseyville.

After a Lake County Silver Foundation Board member passed away, they've created a memorial fund in his name. The Gene Paleno Memorial Fund will have its first event this weekend. The Silver Foundation's estate sale is February 5th & 6th at Gene's home in Witter Springs. Gene was an author and his books were popular in and out of the county. The money the Foundation raised from the estate sale will be used to support Lake County seniors.

All are invited to drop in. Anyone wishing to volunteer, please call 707-295-6198.

A nonprofit is giving to the food bank continually. It's been more than 40 years since the Clear Lake Gleaners started a food bank. They look to serve the elderly, low-income and homeless families. The Gleaners say they've applied for a grant so they can buy property that has a large warehouse and say they've received tons of donations to get there. They're inviting the public to their headquarters in Finley to see their operation and possibly donate.

The Chairman of the Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians has sent a letter to the Governor for immediate action regarding the management of the Jackson Demonstration Forest. Chair Michael Hunter is asking for government to government consultations regarding the forest located in the Tribe's ancestral Northern Pomo and Coast Yuki ancestral territory. He cited action by the Governor who said all state agencies, departments, boards and commissions should support California tribes' co-management and access to natural lands in a California tribe's ancestral land but now owned and controlled by the state. They're looking for revisions to the management plan to address tribal concerns.

The US Forest Service is looking for folks interested in joining the firefighting field. The agency is under the U.S. Department of Agriculture. They're hiring across California in permanent and permanent seasonal opportunities. They have loads of specialized positions, including, engines, fuels management, helitack, hotshot crews, prevention, and smoke jumping. You might travel elsewhere in the state or across the country. You have to apply on USAJobs and they're only accepting applicants until one week from tomorrow, February 11th.

Visit the Forest Service Jobs webpage, [fs.usda.gov/fsjobs](https://fs.usda.gov/fsjobs), to learn more about career opportunities, benefits, hiring events, and resources to help with the application process.

There's more snow in the mountains above us. Survey crews from the Covelo Ranger Station finished up their February snow survey showing 39 inches of average snow depth at the Anthony Peak survey site. Their deepest measurement was 50 inches though, compared to a year ago when it was around half that. Last February was 28 inches, and February 2020 was 26 inches. Mendo Fever reports another snow survey is planned for next month. It's all part of the California Cooperative Snow Surveys, paid for by the State and part of the California Department of Water Resources.

Several new CHP officers are being sworn in. Yesterday over 140 members of the latest California Highway Patrol cadet training class all did a five-mile run from the Academy in West Sacramento to the California Peace Officers' Memorial. It's something they do at the end of each 6 month long class. The new officers, who will service all across the state, will be sworn in at their graduation ceremony at the CHP Academy tomorrow.

Clearlake police answered 3 percent more calls, made 6 percent fewer arrests, and made almost 3,700 traffic stops in 2021. Those were a few of the statistics that Clearlake Police Chief Andrew White has outlined to the city council. Lake Co News reports White told the council that violent crime in Clearlake was down 18 percent last year, to a 7 year low, but that he is concerned about a 12 percent increase in larceny cases. The chief also cited recruitment as an ongoing challenge with three officers hired out of a pool of 50 applicants. Overall, he called Clearlake a statistically safer community than it was the year before.

02/04/22

Mendocino County has a new Youth Poet Laureate. Local poets and teachers chose Point Arena High School sophomore Sidney Regelbrugge from a field of 12 young applicants. She will be busy in her new role, conducting at least 5 public readings while writing and publishing her own poems. She will get a \$500 scholarship as part of the honor. The 15-year-old calls poetry her home and says she wants to make others equally comfortable with poems and the written word. The Mendocino County Youth Laureate Program is organized by California Poets in the Schools and supported by the Bill Graham Supporting Foundation, with additional support from the Arts Council of Mendocino County and Mendocino County Office of Education.

After some sort of altercation at a home in Willits a man is arrested for allegedly pulling a rifle and shooting it at a group, including small kids. Police say they got a call Wednesday early morning to reports of assault with a firearm, involving family members. The victim reported she, her partner and two kids were trying to leave the home, when her husband was nearly shot by Riley Rogers-Wood as they got into their car. Police say Rogers-Wood then barricaded himself inside with his girlfriend and their newborn. He did come out several minutes later and was arrested. He's charged with Assault with a Deadly Weapon, Shooting into an Occupied Vehicle, Negligent Discharge of a Firearm and Child Endangerment.

In a surprise move, PG&E has resurrected the Potter Valley Project which they previously said they would stop running. After the energy company's bankruptcy a group including Sonoma and Mendocino counties were trying to buy the old plant to keep diverting water from the Eel River to the Russian River, but announced they couldn't gather money or make the deadline to apply for a license from the federal government. PG&E called the project "non-economic" for years. It needs some repairs which could cost between 5 to ten million dollars and it could take up to two years. PG&E surprised many Wednesday announcing it would be beneficial to their customers to do the work and return the project to full operational status and continue operating. Congressman Jared Huffman says he thinks they will still eventually decommission the project.

Year-end numbers for cannabis enforcement by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife have been released. They also reported on environmental damage from the illegal operations, some of which the agency says involved streambed alterations with water diversions, habitat destruction, illegal use of pesticides and poaching. They pulled 2.6 million illegal cannabis plants, destroyed nearly 500,000 pounds of illegal cannabis flower, served 1,125 search warrants, found almost 800 firearms, removed 32,230 lbs. of trash and removed over 400 illegal water diversions. The agency says they have 68 dedicated cannabis enforcement officers working with county, state and federal partners to fight illegal cultivation activity.

\$200 million dollars was the cost of trying to remove Governor Gavin Newsom from office. The recall election cost the state and local governments \$200.2 million dollars to be exact for the Sept. 14th special election. But voters kept Newsom in a landslide. The Secretary of State reported the expenses were slightly below what had been anticipated. It was the second recall attempt against a Governor in the state, the last one against Gov. Gray Davis was successful. Republican and radio talk show host Larry Elder had the most votes of all who were trying to take Newsom's job. The state had put \$215 million aside for the recall but had projected it would cost \$243 million.

The Governor says the state will soon have a so-called "endemic strategy" to continue to deal with COVID-19. He's mentioned this a couple times the last couple weeks. At the same time the state's first ever Surgeon General announced she would be leaving the job next Friday. And just a few days before the statewide mask mandate is set to end again. Some parents are still trying to fight schools continuing mask wearing mandates; and some doctors in San Francisco started a petition to get the governor to start removing all remaining COVID-19 restrictions in public schools. But others say not worrying about the virus is impossible for many.

After internet was out across multiple counties, the chief executive officer of internet service provider Sonic says it was vandalism that caused the service interruption. He says vandals tried to steal copper off some railroad tracks in Cloverdale, which actually don't have copper in them. A cable owned by AT&T was cut by the would-be crooks and the utility company is investigating the crime. Internet was off for several hours after several cellphone towers were knocked offline in Cloverdale, Hopland and Lake County last Thursday night. They also reported degraded service in Healdsburg, Mendocino, Ukiah and Fort Bragg.

The Mendocino County Public Health Officer Dr. Coren says we may have seen the peak of the latest COVID19 strain, omicron. In his Friday address Coren said new cases had been much higher than previous spikes in cases in the county, at almost three times more than the highest daily rates recorded last September. He says hospitalized cases had flattened, but deaths were up, like we've seen all along with the virus, cases go up, then a few weeks later, the deaths follow. There were 12 deaths this year so far, including three last week, for a total of 117 deaths since the pandemic began. As of Thursday nine people were in the hospital, including a

02/07/22 newborn baby, and seven people were in an ICU.

The Lake County Sheriff Brian Martin says he will run for re-election, making it his third term as the sheriff-coroner if he's re-elected. Lake Co News reports Martin saying it's been a lot more challenging, but also much more rewarding than he could have imagined. He's been the head of the agency since 2015. He's led the office through several devastating emergencies, wildfires and floods. He says if he wins with voters in the election, his work will include fine-tuning what's already in place, and continue dealing with the same sort of emergencies, but expects a curve ball to be tossed in for good measure.

An affordable housing project will be considered at the next Lake County Board of Supervisors meeting. Supervisor Bruno Sabatier will bring the subject forward to consider renegotiating provisions of an agreement the supervisors approved last fall regarding a housing project in Nice. Sabatier is also asking for a possible audit of financial activity around a loan and loan forgiveness for the same project. At the same meeting, supervisors will take a peak at the midyear budget which was presented by the County Administrative Office. They will also consider a special election for a seat on the Middletown Unified School District Board of Education after a petition to remove a member.

There's a wrinkle in Gov. Gavin Newsom's higher education budget. The idea has not been presented to lawmakers for negotiations yet, that happens later this spring. But in Newsom's January budget proposal, he had added ideas to fund the two public university systems over the next five years, calling them "multiyear compacts". Each would get 5% more for their base funding through 2026-27 and in exchange the college systems will work to graduate more students and make college more affordable. But there's a faction against the plan, including the non-partisan Legislative Analyst's Office, who said the Governor went around the Legislature, undermining their authority directly negotiating with the university systems. But CSU and UC leaders reportedly like the deal.

On the downlow the Governor's office has reportedly negotiated a deal with Kaiser Permanente for a special Medicaid contract so the health care giant can expand where they serve, and continue to pick which enrollees it wants. But other providers say it's unfair and leaves them with a lopsided share of the sickest and most expensive patients. The deal reportedly agreed to behind closed doors between bigwigs at Kaiser Permanente and senior officials in Newsom's office. Other providers are supposedly infuriated saying they could lose hundreds of thousands of patients and millions of dollars annually.

A bill in the state Assembly could help provide more affordable housing options for college students. The University of California had more students than there was space for last fall. Assemblymember Kevin Mc-Carty of Sacramento's bill would create a pool of \$5 billion for interest free loans to public colleges and universities so they could expand their affordable housing offerings. That could mean up to 21,000 more students finding housing. It would build on another plan for a \$2 billion state grant fund for affordable student housing approved last year.

A fire reported in Ukiah turned out not to really be. Mendo Fever reported early afternoon smoke in the area of 1300 North State Street yesterday. Something reportedly burning behind a burnt-out smoke shop. The news site reports multiple fire engines from the Ukiah Valley Fire Authority were on the scene. But when firefighters arrived, they found it was just smoke coming from a barbecue and no fire after all.

Low flow fishing instructions for several Northern Calif. waterways including the Smith, Eel and Russian Rivers. The California Fish and Game Commission adopted the emergency regulations to protect runs of salmon and steelhead. The state Dept. of Fish & Wildlife extended fishing restrictions to other coastal rivers and streams through April 30th only when low flows which could be potentially lethal to salmon and steelhead populations. The regulations went into effect January 31st closing coastal rivers in Del Norte and Humboldt counties including the Smith, Mad, Eel, Van Duzen and Mattole rivers. The Gualala, Russian and Napa rivers in Mendocino, Sonoma and Marin counties and several others are impacted through March 31st yearly.

A woman in the town of Mendocino is offering a reward for her missing dog, Reese. The \$500 reward is for anyone who helps owner Holly find the dog who she says she thinks heard gunshots ring out, then run off on February 2nd, last Wednesday. The dog missing from the area of Little Lake Road off Powers Road. The dog is 12 years old, white on all paws and a white owl face, and a tumor on one lip and could be limping or walking slowly. She says the dog is microchipped.

Holly asks the community to, "Please keep a lookout for her!!" If you locate Reese, call Holly at 925-788-5762 or email her at [holly@mendocinomoon.com](mailto:holly@mendocinomoon.com).

The state Attorney General says his office has conducted a three day operation to remove firearms from people not allowed to have them in the Bay Area. Atty. General Rob Bonta says they worked with the San Francisco District Attorney's Office, the Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office, the California Highway Patrol, the Contra Costa County Probation Department, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation – Division of Adult Parole Operations, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, finding 30 firearms and arresting eight individuals. The state was the first to come up with a tracking system to find firearm owners who are not allowed to have weapons.

After reports of a domestic dispute in Mendocino County, Sheriff's Deputies were out in the 1300 block of North State Street in Ukiah and arrested Grover Hunter. They say last Monday Hunter was arguing with his girlfriend who called, and they found a bunch of Fentanyl and a usable amount of methamphetamine in plain site. When the woman came out of the bathroom, they could see she had been assaulted. Deputies say they saw other evidence that the home was being used for drug sales, so Hunter was booked into jail on charges including Felony Possession Narcotic/Controlled Substance For Sale and Misdemeanor Possession of Controlled Substance and held on \$25,000.00 bail.

Prosecutors in Sonoma County are going after Pacific, Gas & Electric in court this week, related to the Kincade Fire. The DA's office had previously blamed the giant utility with responsibility for the 2019 fire that burned 77,000 acres, caused a massive evacuation in the county and destroyed 174 homes. The DA's office has laid out over 33 felony and misdemeanor charges against the company. And the preliminary hearing, to see if they can be held responsible, starts tomorrow. The hearing could take over two weeks to show there's enough evidence to try the utility company who has denied any wrongdoing.

Indoor mask wearing is ending for those who've been fully vaccinated in California. The governor reinstated the mandate after the omicron variant took hold in the state, but as of next Tuesday, February 15th, the mandate ends for those who've been inoculated, but masks are still being enforced for schoolchildren. Unvaccinated people will still have to wear masks indoors and everyone should wear them in higher-risk areas like public transit and nursing homes.

02/08/22

A reminder there are walking talks at the Jackson Demonstration Forest with officials from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). The first one is Friday the 11th of February with special guests Chris Baldo and Myles Anderson (of Willits Redwood and Anderson Logging). The "Walk and Talk" discussion is about the Caspar 500 Timber Harvest Plan (THP) which has been the subject of various protests the last year. Cal Fire says their intent is to create dialogue with the community on the harvest and hear ideas from the community too. There will be walking and driving to different points. You must provide your own transportation, wear sturdy shoes and bringing lunch and water, they say, would be a good idea.

A man from Ukiah who deputies saw walking along a street has been arrested. Patrol Deputies say they recognized Jonnie Mize from various contacts in the past and knew he had an active felony arrest warrant, so he was detained as they ran a records check, then arrested and held on \$25,000.00 bail.

Various mutations of the COVID-19 virus have been circulating nationwide, now researchers collecting California's wastewater say they've found genetic changes in the virus. UC Berkeley scientists say the virus found had shown no signs of causing illness and had not led to any outbreaks. They say though that the variation they've detected had genetic changes, similar to the omicron strain. The same weird lineage, the scientists say had been found in mutations in the sewage of other cities, like New York City and St. Louis, Missouri.

Millions in repairs are coming to recreation sites and reservoirs serving Mendocino and Sonoma counties. Federal dollars will repair visitor shelters and foot bridges after the Hopkins fire destroyed structures at Lake Mendocino. More money will come for improvements at the Warm Springs Dam near Healdsburg and the Coyote Valley Dam at Ukiah. Part of the 7.5 million dollars from the fed will help replace service gates at the Warm Springs Dam underground, the most of the money. Another \$1.5 million will go to repaint the control tower bridge at the Coyote Valley Dam. And \$20,000 will go to monitor the Bodega Bay rock jetty.

Money from the state is going to help fix up the Anderson Marsh Interpretive Association. The Association says they received \$800,000 from the California Department of Parks & Rec for critical repairs at the historic Anderson Ranch House located at the park. Lake Co News reports it's one of the oldest remaining buildings in Lake County. The money is going to make foundation repairs to stabilize the ranch house. Right now they're inspecting the area and then they will put the final project together. So, there is no construction start date yet.

The Academic Decathlon team from Upper Lake High are going to the state competition. The team was in the Bay Regional Academic Decathlon last weekend, getting far enough to move to the state competition. 250 students from 17 high schools competed with the theme, "Water, A Most Essential Resource". They competed in tests, speeches and interviews last week, then competed Saturday with a virtual SUPER QUIZ. The awards ceremony followed. Upper Lake was Sixth overall, but Willits was fourth. So they too will move on to the state competition representing Mendocino County.

The Savings Bank of Mendocino County has started its renovation of their lobby at the Ukiah Main Banking Center on School St. The makeover began yesterday, and they will remain open during the remodel which should go on through the first of July. The COO of the bank says their Ukiah Main Banking Center is “the heart” of their Main Office and they’re excited about the positive changes the remodel will bring. She says she thinks customers will find it more comfortable and services will become easier to access.

There’s a new doctor joining Adventist Health in Ukiah. Board-certified OB/GYN Erin Conroy will have an office at the Ukiah Valley Medical Office. She got her degree at Loma Linda University School of Medicine then was a resident at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston and holds a master’s degree in public health with a focus on epidemiology from Loma Linda as well. She previously worked in Siskiyou County and has contributed to breast cancer research funded by the National Institutes of Health’s National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities.

A new study shows rental prices in the North Bay have gone through the roof. A rent data research firm called the Apartment List found out of 3,300 listings, Marin was the highest, up 16% last month from 2021. In Sonoma and Napa counties they were up about 13% and 10%, respectively. Solano County was up 8%. The study also said renters or mortgage holders were dealing with higher prices and that more and more people were moving to rural towns, especially if they were remote workers who wanted more space. In Sonoma County though, there’s a law that landlords cannot increase rent on existing tenants more than 10%. But new renters are not protected. At the same time state-sponsored Emergency Rent Assistance Programs are running dry.

The Sonoma County Public Health Officer has announced an end to the temporary health order restricting the size of large gatherings. The restriction ends just before midnight Thursday. Dr. Sundari Mase says the numbers are trending in the right direction and it looks clear that they have gotten past the winter omicron surge. She did however say those with underlying health conditions, especially seniors over 65 years old, should still avoid large gatherings and wear masks indoors if they haven’t been boosted or vaccinated.

The yearly Point In Time Count by the Mendocino County Homeless Services Continuum of Care is set. The agency will begin at sunset on February 23rd, two weeks from tomorrow. It runs thru the following week and is mandated by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. The state and several federal agencies depend on the counts to allocate homeless services money. The information they gather also helps the local community identify needs and develop plans to get the help unsheltered people need in Mendocino County.

Three more felonies have been added to charges against Pacific, Gas & Electric related to the Kincade Fire. Prosecutors in Sonoma County reduced the overall charges from 33 to 30. New ones include recklessly and unlawfully starting a fire that caused "great bodily injury" and five others for violating air pollution laws due to the wildfire smoke. The fire burned in October of 2019 and charred nearly 78,000 acres, destroyed 174 homes and almost 200 other structures including a winery. PG&E's own enforcement division found there was a high-voltage transmission tower still energized over a decade after it should have been turned off and removed. A report says the energized equipment was abandoned and provided no benefit or convenience to the public.

A man from Ukiah has been arrested after reports a man was being shot at by another man last Sunday. The Sheriff's Dept. reports finding Miguel Lopez in the street in front of a home and that he seemed drunk, with his shirt off and being verbally hostile towards the Deputies. He was detained for public intoxication, and they found a gun in the console of a truck connected to him. When they checked his records, they found out he was not allowed to have a firearm, so he was arrested. Charges included Unlawful possession of a firearm and Public Intoxication. He was being held

02/09/22 on \$25,000.00 bail.

Because he was found with a dagger, a man from Ukiah is behind bars. Mendocino Deputies say they responded to a domestic call Monday and couldn't find anyone at the address, so they searched around and found Jeremiah Medlin. They say he was in an argument with a woman, but there wasn't any physical violence, however they found a large, fixed blade knife hidden in his shirt sleeve. He was arrested for Felony Carry Concealed Dirk or Dagger and then they found meth and paraphernalia on him, so he was further charged for that and held on \$15,000.00 bail.

The Mendocino County Treasurer-Tax Collector has resigned. Sheri Schapmire who's been on the job for fifteen years and working for the county for forty. Mendo Fever reports Schapmire told them there were too many issues with the county government and she can't work with the current Board of Supervisors, so she decided to retire March 19th, almost a year before the end of her term. She says after she was directed to reorganize the county's fiscal departments to combine her office with the Auditor-Controller, and told the board they should just replace the retiring controller instead. Then it all fell apart.

Just because the state is rescinding the latest mask mandate, starting next week, Mendocino County is not. The county does not have to follow the state mandate and can enforce its own restrictions. The Public Health Officer Dr. Andy Coren says indoor masks will still be required because of a strain locally on hospitals. He says rescinding our mask mandate would be a bad idea, but that there will be some modifications for indoor venues for folks who've been vaccinated. According to the CDC guidelines, Mendocino County's transmission rate is considered "high". Coren says more info will be released by next Tuesday.

The Community Foundation of Mendocino County is accepting applications for its 2022 Scholarship Program. Locals establish the scholarships which help honor someone. Some are countywide, others regional. Donors choose what kind of applicant they'd like to see receive the scholarship. Last year they gave out nearly \$285,000. They also give out vocational scholarships for students interested in a technical, trade or vocational school.



State Senator Mike McGuire's legislation to stop a potential environmental threat by allowing coal to slip thru Northern Calif. in a secret operation, has passed. SB307 will prevent any state money to help improve the long defunct North Coast rail line which McGuire is also trying to turn into a recreation site instead. He says the "proposed toxic coal train is an environmental disaster in the making". McGuire says the clandestine operation was looking to move coal through thriving communities, ancient redwoods, and directly along the banks of the Eel and Russian rivers, a main drinking water source for nearly 1 million people. The bill moves to the Assembly next.

Congressman Jared Huffman working with colleagues, including Representative Katie Porter, also of Calif. to send letters to a half dozen cryptomining companies due to their massive energy usage. The letters went to Riot Blockchain, Marathon Digital Holdings, Stronghold Digital Mining, Bitdeer, Bitfury Group, and Bit Digital about their cryptomining operations, massive energy consumption and the possible impact it may be having on the climate and local environments. They claim that is helping to drive up electricity costs for ordinary American consumers. Cryptomining in upstate New York alone reportedly spiked yearly electric bills by about \$165 million for small businesses and \$79 million for consumers.

The state is looking at ways to make sure folks who have had to take time off due to getting infected or dealing with some aspect of coronavirus, get paid. The Legislature passed a bill this week making sure businesses give workers up to two weeks paid time off if they get sick from the coronavirus. It's also retroactive to the beginning of the year. State and federal requirements since the beginning of the pandemic said most employers had to give workers PTO, but a lot of the laws expired, including in Calif., last September. But then omicron happened. A bunch of Republicans said it would cost too much and voted against it. And some Democrats say they'd like to see the state help businesses so they could afford it.

A special election is happening to choose a new member of the Middletown Unified School District Board after one was tossed. The Superintendent of Schools has asked the Board of Supervisors to allow the Registrar of Voters Office to set the election during the statewide primary on June 7th. The Board has unanimously agreed to the request after a group of residents filed a petition to get Annette Lee off the board for statements about masking and vaccinating children. She was chosen after another board member quit over COVID-19-related mandates. Lake Co News reports the same board seat will come up again November during the General Election.

Cleanup by the state is done for the Cache Fire which burned in Clearlake last summer. The Governor's Office of Emergency Services said the state contractors pulled out the rest of the debris, including burned metal, concrete, ash and contaminated soil out of nearly 80 homes and on property where owners allowed the state onto their properties for the cleanup work. In some cases, private contractors are hired too. The same for 19 properties in the Hopkins Fire footprint in Mendocino County. The state reports removing over 5,020 tons of debris from Mendocino County and about 9,300 from Lake County.

The Ukiah Planning Commission will take up approval of the proposed butterfly mural at the Alex R. Thomas Jr. plaza. The Design Review Board recommended it last month. The mural would showcase the three stages of a Monarch butterfly. The artist has previously done two other murals in Ukiah, at the High School and the Mendocino County Juvenile Detention Center. The meeting is tonight at 6 on Zoom.

[https:// zoom.us/j/91264543193](https://zoom.us/j/91264543193) Or call: 1-669-900-9128 or 1-346-248-7799  
Dial Toll Free: 888-788-0099 or 833-548-0282 Webinar ID: 912 6454 3193

was then immediately appointed to the position by the CEO. The county touted her more than 30 years of experience in health and human services in the nonprofit and government sectors, working for agencies like First 5 Mendocino. Molgaard said she was excited to promote health and wellbeing

02/10/22 for all Mendocino County residents.

Sonoma County reports the first death of a child from coronavirus. The county announced yesterday that a girl between 12 and 17 is the first child to die from the pandemic. They didn't say much more about it. The Press Democrat reports the county said the girl had underlying health conditions, was in the hospital and not fully vaccinated. There were seven new COVID deaths this week in the county for a total now of 455. The newspaper reports January was the deadliest month for the virus since August.

Volunteers are needed for the Mendocino County Homeless Services Continuum of Care Point-in-Time count. They are starting the yearly unsheltered count for the state and federal government at sunset on February 23rd and it will go through the whole following week. The data used helps provide services to the unsheltered in the County.

If you would like to volunteer, please sign up at <https://Mendocino22.PointInTime.info/>. If you have questions or would like further information, please contact Veronica Wilson at [hometeam@mendocinocounty.org](mailto:hometeam@mendocinocounty.org) or (707) 468-7071.

Reports on a police scanner of an armed robbery and a getaway, then a crash. Mendo Fever reports the incident happened in Clearlake last night about 5 pm. The CHP reports two people got away from the scene in a black BMW that was weaving in and out of lanes, almost crashing into oncoming traffic and rolling. Then two people jumped into a red SUV driven by a female. The news site also reports some drugs and or alcohol and stolen property may have been found in the crashed vehicle. Social media reports said it was several pounds of cannabis in plastic bags that were found in the vehicle and spread over the roadway.

Most Bay Area counties, except Santa Clara are allowing folks to go maskless in indoor settings. Santa Clara reported they will keep the mandate going so that cases of COVID19 can come down. The other counties will go maskless starting next Wednesday, February 16th. But the Santa Clara County Public Health Officer said there were still too many cases there for her to be okay with following the other counties. She did say cases were plateauing and that they had reached their vaccination metric, and that the metric for low and stable COVID-19 hospitalizations is close.

The Governor has signed a bill into law to reinstate sick pay for most Calif. workers who have to take time off for COVID-19 related illness or absence. Newsom made a public appearance at a restaurant in Oakland to tout the new policy which sort of extended one that ended last September. The sick leave policy says businesses who have at least 26 workers can take time off to recover from COVID-19, care for a sick family member, go to a vaccination appointment, take time off after an immunization or take care of a child who can't go to school because of virus-related closures or quarantines.

A woman from Novato accused of crashing and killing two people from Clearlake has reported to court ahead of her sentencing. 22 year old Keilah Coyle was driving a Ford F-150 truck last spring and drifted over Highway 29 to the other side, hitting a GMC van head-on north of Middletown. 53 year old Cassandra Rolich and 47 year old Miguel Maciel Dominguez died at the scene of the crash. CHP officers said Coyle was driving under the influence, so she was arrested then. She pleaded no contest to Gross Vehicular Manslaughter with vessel while intoxicated and DUI with Alcohol while causing injury. Her Blood Alcohol Level (BAC) was nearly two times the legal limit, .15. She will be sentenced March 7th.

PG&E says just like other years, as there's an increase in energy usage this time of year, costs go up for natural gas. The energy giant is blaming higher natural gas usage on lower outside temperatures and the need to crank up the heat. The company says heating systems, water heaters and washer and dryers account for more than 70% of winter energy use in the typical home. So they're offering tips to consumers on ways to keep costs down, checking your air filters every three months, check your air ducts for leaks, holes or poor connections, lower the temp on your water heater, use cold water to wash clothes, and longer spin cycles.

Lake County is working to lower chronic absenteeism in schools. The Lake County Office of Education (LCOE) Attendance Liaisons have a new program, Communities for School Success. A former teacher at Terrace Middle School in Lakeport is running the program and has a staff of seven Attendance Liaisons who work with students to help them get back into school. Each of the Attendance Liaisons is assigned to a school. They say out of 675 K-12 Lake County students they contacted, 65 percent showed improvement in their attendance. The program is a partnership between the Lake County office of Education, and the Lake County school districts and is funded through a grant from the California Department of Education (CDE).

The Mendocino County Sheriff says there's no truth to the rumors going around about a serial killer after several young women were found dead. Sheriff Matt Kendall says what is true is that there have been some drug overdoses and that Fentanyl is the real killer. The comments after two Mendocino County women's bodies were found less than a week apart along Highway 101. 33 year old Amber Dillon of Willits and 22 year old Alyssa Mae Sawdey of Ukiah, both found last month about 25 miles apart. The Sheriff has not confirmed the two women died of overdosing as toxicology reports are not back on either of them.

A bill has been introduced in the state Assembly by member Cecilia Aguiar-Curry so that nursing homes stop the practice of using anti-psychotic drugs on patients. Aguiar-Curry introduced the bill because of the so-called "chemical restraints" in Calif. The Human Rights Watch reported about four years ago that the practice should be considered abuse, and it's being used more and more. The drugs were first developed to help treat conditions like schizophrenia. Assemblymember Aguiar-Curry says the practice harkens back to the middle-ages.

02/11/22 Add electricity to the list of things costing more after State regulators approved a rate increase for PG&E customers. The average residential customer will have to pay another \$16.27 a month for power. That's about 11%, with average bills over \$200 a month among the highest in the country; If you think the just went up, you're right. That last increase took effect in January. PG&E says it needs the money to continue to make improvements to its infrastructure and curb the risk of wildfires.

A hearing has been set for a woman from Nevada accused of setting a fire in Lake County last fall. Lake County Superior Court will the latest in the case against 39 year old Nickelina Williams, who remains in custody after a ruling that she is NOT competent to stand trial. She was charged with felony arson of forest land, felony arson during a state of emergency and possessing material/device for arson after that fire on Highway 29 on October 13th. At the time, she denied setting it, but officers reported they found a lighter and other evidence nearby. The hearing on March 1st is to confirm that Williams is undergoing treatment through the state Department of State Hospitals.

Volunteers will take to the streets later this month to count the number of people with no place to live in Mendocino County.. What's called a Point in Time count will take place February 23rd. The results are used to determine federal funding for programs for the homeless. The count takes place every couple years during conditions that make it unlikely that travelers would be included. The last such survey in January 2020 found 751 people in 700 households, a slight increase from 681 people counted in 2019. Homeless Services Continuum of Care group coordinating the count> You can find out more and learn how to volunteer at the website [Mendocino22PointInTime.info](http://Mendocino22PointInTime.info).

Another arrest for a former Ukiah Police Sergeant. Mendo Fever reports Kevin Murray has been cited for stealing a woman's wallet at a grocery store in Lakeport. He's out on bail though for several crimes in Mendocino County. Lakeport police say Murray turned the wallet in, he supposedly found. But there was a report after that, and a look at the store's surveillance system showed a man taking the wallet from a store shelf. Some items were missing from the wallet. He's awaiting for a court date too for an alleged rape, and was sued by a Ukiah resident for assault. He was fired from the police department. He's due in court March 14th.

The Mendocino County Public Health Office says the mask mandate for indoor settings is staying even though surrounding counties, some with less cases, are rescinding theirs. The Governor announced no more masks for most people in indoor settings starting next week, but the CDC said they recommend continuing the mask wearing where there is substantial transmission. The Public Health Officer, Dr. Andy Coren says there's just not enough of a decline in hospitalizations and ICU admissions to warrant the move. At the same time Siskiyou, Shasta, Tehama, Lake, and Del Norte Counties have higher transmission rates.

The Governor's office says there will be a new approach to the pandemic. Starting next week we will enter an endemic stage where the virus is still in the community, but is manageable as immunity builds. Governor Newsom says over the last two years they've learned what works and what doesn't. The state was the first for a mask mandate and some Republican lawmakers want it totally rescinded along with other restrictions from way back then. But Newsom says the new approach will allow for flexibility of thinking which will still include quarantines, testing for people who don't have symptoms and other precautions. Plus other measures so they can be proactive against possible new strains of the virus.

The Lake County Registrar of Voters office is officially notifying voters of a Special Election to fill the office of Governing Board Member for the Middletown Unified School District. As we reported after the Board of Supervisors voted for it, the special election will be included in the next Statewide Primary Election set for June 7th. The Official Declaration of Candidacy forms are available now at the Registrar of Voters office in person. Monday is the first day the filing window opens and the last day is Friday, March 11th.

After an investigation into a water theft in Lake County, the Sheriff's Office reports gathering a room full of illegally grown marijuana. The take down from the Sheriff's Office Marijuana Enforcement Unit Tuesday in Clearlake Oaks. They investigated three homes which they say were used to dry and process marijuana for sale where they were also apparently stealing water. Detectives secured the homes and served a search warrant, finding a 12 gauge shotgun, two thousand three hundred twenty six (2,326) marijuana plants and about seven thousand six hundred pounds (7,600 lbs) of processed marijuana, with much of that already packaged for sale. They say the street value was about seven million dollars. Salvador Diaz Maciel was arrested at one home for illegal cultivation and processing of marijuana. The Sheriff says it's the most marijuana they've ever seized.

At the latest Middletown Area Town Hall, the Lake County Sheriff, District Attorney and Chief Deputy DA were there talking about crime and law enforcement challenges. Sheriff Brian Martin, District Attorney Susan Krones and Chief Deputy District Attorney Richard Hinchcliff were on Zoom with attendees who were concerned about crime in their neighborhoods. The Sheriff said some of the main issues causing the crime were mental health, drug and alcohol abuse, high housing costs, domestic violence and a lack of family support. The others blamed the "Safe Neighborhood and Schools Act", passed in 2014, and another initiative in 2016, for negatively impacting efforts to reduce crime.

Congressman Mike Thompson says the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act is paying to install electric vehicle charging stations along key roads and highways. Thompson says there is \$56 million coming to California to create good-paying jobs, improve charger access and help protect California's environment. He says it's a way to fight climate change as well as incentivize electric vehicle production and investment into expanding EV charging stations across the country. Thompson currently represents the Fifth Congressional District, which includes all or part of Contra Costa, Lake, Napa, Solano and Sonoma counties.

A group of people against mask protections have protested outside the Mendocino County Public Health Officer's home. The so-called Mendocino Patriots apparently didn't surprise Dr. Andy Coren as the County CEO Carmel Angelo said Coren was aware the group was going to gather outside his home. Angelo says the county notified Ukiah Police and the Sheriff's Office. The CEO says Coren didn't request any response. There were only a handful of people there though, and it was only for a couple hours. The group seemed to form last year and protested the mask mandate at local businesses. Dr. Coren reported going outside to garden during the protest

02/14/22 and said they didn't bother him and were mostly peaceful.

Surveillance cameras are being brought in to watch for potential arsonists by the Ukiah Valley Fire Authority. Ahead of the Ukiah City Council meeting tomorrow the fire agency said they were renting two surveillance cameras in a two-year contract for \$10,500. It is on the city council's agenda, but it doesn't require approval necessarily. The report to the council says they need to increase eyes on the ground due to an increase in arson-related incidents. The report also says they're using Flock Safety Camera Solutions who have been contracted in the past by the Sheriff's office, Ukiah Police and law enforcement in Lake County.

State Sen. Mike McGuire's climate emergency declaration is moving on to the state Assembly. McGuire's resolution passed the Senate 30-4 which, if it fully passes, would declare a climate crisis emergency in the state. It was introduced after some student leaders brought up the idea, then lawmakers started the work last summer. The Governor has also set \$15 billion in funding aside through his California Comeback Plan for wildfire and forest resilience, to support immediate drought response and long-term water resilience, and protect communities from various climate risks, including extreme heat and sea level rise. But McGuire says still more needs to be done.

A woman from Clearlake accused of igniting fires in Lower Lake is set for court again next month. Kayla Renee Main did not make it to her last scheduled hearing, apparently due to behavior issues at the jail. She was supposed to go to inpatient treatment to address mental health concerns, and the court gave permission for her to be involuntarily drugged until she could understand the proceedings against her. It comes after her lawyer declared he didn't feel Main would be able to follow along in court due to her mental competency. All proceedings were suspended last year. But the court finds Main is competent to answer to the charges now, of arson of property, possessing material/device for arson and unlawful fire, resisting an executive officer, and violating probation and vandalism.

The new Registrar of Voters Office is opening in Lake County. The Registrar of Voters, Maria Valadez and her team are opening the new offices today at 325 N. Forbes St. in Lakeport, in the old PG& E building. Valadez says it's been challenging in recent elections, especially after the pandemic surfaced, for them to provide enough space. She says the new office will enhance public confidence about the work they do and they're excited to continue "providing the highest quality service."

The Governor's office has announced the Clean California Initiative is giving nearly \$312 million to 126 beautification projects statewide. Almost all of the projects are for "historically underserved or excluded communities." That includes Mendocino County's "Central Boonville Beautification" project. There will be new art installations, crosswalks, and landscaping. And the "Covelo Downtown Connectivity" project is getting traffic calming features so the town's Main Street will get a makeover to reduce litter and improve safety and connectivity for non-motorized users. The Governor's office says all of the projects statewide will help foster cultural connections and civic pride.

After reports of a domestic incident in Willits, Police report arresting a man. Derrick McCain could be heard yelling and screaming in the background when a woman called for help. She said he had been drinking. When cops got there they say they could hear McCain possibly assaulting the woman and threatening her if she kept him away from his kids. He then came out of the home and police contacted him, saying he seemed drunk, was belligerent and tried to get away. Apparently the woman didn't want McCain to take his kids to the park while he was drunk. There were two young kids there and Child Protective Services was called. McCain was arrested for Robbery, Criminal Threats, Obstructing/Preventing a 911 Call and Child Endangerment.

The Bureau of Land Management is taking public input for grant applications for the California State Parks Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division. The BLM Bakersfield and Ukiah are having virtual town halls on the grant proposals and to get public input. The grants to pay for law enforcement and to operate and maintain the land for recreational use at the Knoxville, Indian Valley and South Cow Mountain management areas locally. The California grants program already funded trail maintenance and restoration, watershed assessments, accessible fire rings and barbecues, informational kiosks, animal-proof trash enclosures, restroom cleaning, route signage, emergency dispatch, sound testing and law enforcement patrols on BLM-managed public lands.

Ukiah Field Office: Feb. 17 at 5:30 p.m.

[Zoom registration link](#)

[Comment by email: BLM\\_CA\\_UK\\_OHV\\_Grants@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_CA_UK_OHV_Grants@blm.gov)

For specific questions, call Ashley Poggio, BLM at 707-468-4000

The Lake County Board of Supervisors is set to discuss masking requirements in county facilities. The board's meeting tomorrow morning online and pretty quickly the Community Development Director is giving an update on operations and will consider the previous urgency ordinance from last July for a temporary moratorium on early activation permits for land use projects within the unincorporated county. Later Supervisor Bruno Sabatier is expected to ask his associates on the board to reconsider the urgency ordinance still in effect for mask wearing in county facilities as the state lifts indoor mask rules for some on Wednesday. The council chambers are open to the public for the meeting.

State Sen. Bill Dodd says he has a way to make it easier for hospitals to operate in a pandemic or other health emergencies. Dodd has introduced legislation to help hospitals across the state respond to public health crises including pandemics by making it easier to process licenses for health professionals, expand insurance coverage and make it easier to bolster bed space for patients. Dodd says the COVID19 pandemic and wildfires and other natural disasters have seriously impacted hospitals and they need to be ready to respond. He says his bill will help to increase hospital capacity, allow better treatment and triaging of victims of pandemics, wildfires, earthquakes and other emergencies.

CAL FIRE says it has as much as \$10 million in funding for Wildfire Resilience Block Grants. The money is to support private forestland owners help improve forest health, resilience to climate change, and reduce forestland impacts due to devastating wildfires as part of the state's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan. The grants are to meet a portion of the Task Force Action Plan goals for those who own nonindustrial forestland.

Those eligible will have 3-5,000 acres. CAL FIRE would distribute the grant money and provide outreach and/or technical/financial help for the work on

02/15/22 their property. CAL FIRE is accepting applications until April 1st.

Two more people in Mendocino County have died from complications of coronavirus. The Public Health Office has put out a statement the 118th death was a vaccinated 91 year old man from the North Coast with other underlying health conditions. And the 119th was also a man, he was 65 years old, fully vaccinated and boosted with co-morbidities who lived in the North County area.

A woman who lost her dog over a week and a half ago has her back. Reese was apparently found by a couple of bike riders on Big River Haul Road on the Mendocino Coast. Owner Holly says two people put her dog in their truck to bring her out of the forest. She says she's a bit tired, had some ticks, but was otherwise healthy after her 11 day journey.

An extension of a consulting agreement for the old Pearce Field airport is being considered by the Clearlake City Council. At their meeting this week, the council is looking at continuing to work to make the airport property a commercial center. They will also consider a voter initiative. The meeting is hybrid, both in person and virtual. The consultant for the airport property wants another \$10,000 a month for 2 more months for their work towards a master development plan. Lake Co News reports the council will also consider the Taxpayer Protection and Government Accountability Act to amend the State Constitution regarding how the state and local governments can impose taxes, fees and other charges.

Applications are being accepted by the Yuba Community College District for a seat on the board of trustees. Trustee Bill Roderick resigned his seat, which needs to be filled for the rest of the year. There's also another election in November too, for seats. Trustee Area 7 is for part of southern Lake County and the Northshore, Colusa and Glenn counties. The board governs the performance of Woodland Community College and Yuba College. The qualifications include: attending all board meetings and major college events, policy issues, and trustee education programs, knowing your community and being committed to community college missions and more.

New toll lanes have opened in the Bay Area that go from Mountain View to Redwood City on Highway 101. It opened last Friday to join up with the 118-mile express lane network. The price is sketchy and changes based on several different toll zones, discounts for carpoolers and clean-air vehicles. It'll cost more during rush hour and more for people driving alone. It's free though for carpools with three or more people and motorcyclists in express lanes. Clean air sticker cars get about half off.

A new healthcare program in California includes case management for those who need help under Medi-Cal. Starting last month CalAIM, or California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal began for low-income residents. Almost half of the state's children, a fifth of adults and a couple million senior citizens and people with disabilities depend on the program. There is apparently \$133 billion a year for Medi-Cal and about half is spent on this 5% sector of folks. CalAIM aims to be more proactive in helping the sickest, with things like food insecurity and housing instability too.

An update is planned by the Lakeport City Council on the planned Lakefront Park Project plus a skating ordinance at the park. Just after the pandemic started in April of 2020, the City received a grant of nearly \$6 million dollars from the 2018 State of California Parks and Water Bond to develop a new community park along the lakefront. Right now engineering plans are getting the finishing touches and they're preparing to put out a bid request for contractors. Since the new park proposes a skatepark, the city will take another look at the skating ordinance. The council meets tonight.



Napa and Sonoma County are looking at new ways they may regulate wineries. An ordinance being floated in Napa which may be adopted next month would create a new category of wine producer between the home-occupation permit and a conventional winery. There would be certain metrics to be considered a microwinery including no marketing. It comes after some voiced concern last fall about the tiny wineries making wine elsewhere. The new micro-winery ordinance is getting support from the Winegrowers of Napa Valley and Napa Valley Vintners. In Sonoma County, they're revisiting their draft winery events ordinance Thursday after six years of consideration delayed by wildfires and the pandemic.

As tens of thousands of college students in the state of Calif. are in need of housing, the California State University system is applying for grants. The system had reportedly read some fine print wrong for construction of affordable student housing, so they're reaching out to the Legislature to develop more housing which could give almost 3,400 students subsidized housing. Cal State applied last fall, but has now submitted revised plans after the system apparently proposed fewer beds than needed for low income students. CalMatters reported and Cal State officials later agreed they erred in their application to the state grant program. The revisions allow for \$823 million in total funding projects for 10 campuses with over half the amount coming from the new state housing grant and the rest from outside funds.

A study by UCLA says California is in a "megadrought" which has not happened since at least 800 A.D. Climate change, higher temperatures and dry conditions are all factors contributing to the now 22 year long drought. The lead author of the study at UCLA says there's an immediate danger. The study shows the state has seen a trio of short-term droughts during twenty years, 2000-2003, 2007-2009 and 2012 to 2016. Each ended when pouring rain came down, the last was in 2017. The last two years have been a short drought too, the study shows, in California and much of the West. Wildfire danger is on the rise again. Researchers say it's highly unlikely one wet year will end this drought.

As the state prepares to end the indoor mask mandate at restaurants, grocery stores and other indoor settings, parents say they're frustrated kids cannot take their masks off at school. The state's health officer had a press conference yesterday, but said they would revisit again at the end of February, before unmasking kids in school. And the California Teachers Association, which boasts more than 300,000 members, supports the cautious decision, however some teachers and parents say it's time to discuss it now. CalMatters reports interviewing parents and educators and heard about social and emotional harm and the supposed minimal benefits of masking as vaccination rates go up and case numbers go down.

Since new cases of COVID19 are slowing, Adventist Health has announced new visitation rules at Adventist Health Ukiah Valley, Adventist Health Howard Memorial Hospital and Adventist Health Mendocino Coast. You're allowed to go for visits, but only one visitor at a time per patient in the Medical-Surgical and Intensive Care Units. The emergency department and all other outpatient services such as lab services, imaging, clinics and medical offices continue with limited access and visitors are encouraged to wait outside. If you are visiting, you must either be vaccinated or show a negative test within 2 days of your visit or prove you have recovered from COVID in the last 90 days. You will have to wear a mask at all times in the

02/16/22 facilities.

[School bus drivers are being honored in the Ukiah Unified School District. The](#)

Public comment at future Mendocino County Board of Supervisors meetings will be at the end of meetings, not as they start. There's been some complaints about the switch apparently, but the board chair says they're just trying it out to give the public the last word. He also says for those who cannot go in person, they can leave voice messages before the meetings start. And for agenda items there is public comment after each of them. But at the end of the meeting, the public can comment on anything on the agenda or items for future agendas.

The Lakeport City Manager has given the City Council an update on the development of the new Lakefront Park. At their meeting last night the council discussed the seven-acre park on Main Street at the old Natural High School property. With a nearly \$6 million dollar grant from the state the council funded the park which boasts fun for the family. There will be a basketball court, ninja gym, amphitheater, splash pad, skate park, multiuse lawn area, large sheltered picnic area, bathrooms and concession building, public art, parking lot, landscaping and lighting across the entire park and an area for a future boathouse. The architects are nearly done and preparing to get the project out to bid for construction companies.

A man who used to own a bike shop in Lakeport and was found guilty of possessing and uploading child pornography had his sentencing date postponed. 60 year old Jeffrey Scott Cramer was arrested in May of 2020 after investigators raided his home and former business, Main Street Bicycles. He was offered a plea deal in exchange for pleaded no contest, but the judge in his case turned the deal down, instead saying she wanted to sentence him to two years because he did what he did intentionally. Now his lawyer wants more time since his plea was to get probation not prison time. He's due back in court now April 4th.

A woman from Lucerne is due in court after the passenger in her car died in a crash. Patricia Murphy is accused of hitting a Ram truck with her Volkswagen which killed Justin Dale of Lucerne. Murphy had minor injuries and was arrested for DUI by the CHP after she was treated at a hospital. She stands charged of gross vehicular manslaughter with vessel while intoxicated and DUI while causing injury. She has pleaded not guilty and is due in court again today. The prosecution requested and received no bail for Murphy.

Two cars have burned at a parking lot of a motel in Ukiah. The Ukiah Valley Fire Authority reports they got a call to the Motel 6 yesterday morning over on North State Street after someone saw the two cars on fire. The department reported the vehicles were fully engulfed at the time, but they got the fire out quickly and there were no injuries reported. Apparently, it happened near a McDonald's restaurant and dispatch received several 911 calls about the fire. Firefighters say there were a bunch of people standing around when they got there, but nobody saw how the vehicles caught fire, and no one knew who owned the cars.

A new report says wine earnings are down for the second quarter of the fiscal year, but that adjusted earnings were way up. Vintage Wine Estates one of the largest in the country reported fiscal second-quarter earnings down nearly 8% from a year before, but adjusted earnings skyrocketed 137% in the same time period. The company out of Santa Rosa makes Calif. and Pacific Northwest wine, spirits and ciders. Their earnings were \$83.6 million, up by almost one-third from almost \$63 million a year before.

The Governor announced the first ever Latina has been nominated to the state Supreme Court. Patricia Guerrero, a San Diego appeals court justice was praised by Newsom and her colleagues. It's rumored she even finished one criminal hearing brief while on the way to the hospital while in labor. She said she was deeply honored by the incredible opportunity to "uphold the rule of law and make a positive impact on the lives of Californians across the state". She is a graduate of University of California, Berkeley and Stanford Law School.

State Sen. Bill Dodd is looking to trying to transform Highway 37 into a toll road to raise money. Dodd announced the reintroduction of his Bill Tuesday which he had introduced before the pandemic, then rescinded as the pandemic hit. The idea to raise funds to protect the highway as waters rise in the San Pablo Bay. If approved, drivers would pay to travel on the Highway between Sears Point and Mare Island. He says there's also a twin measure for almost \$2 billion in federal funds for transportation projects to help with the effects of climate change. Reports say Highway 37 could be under water within 20 years.

02/17/22

A couple of cars have crashed on the 101 outside Willits. The CHP reported the collision around mile marker 41 near Black Bart Drive, south of Willits. One of the cars burst into flames which stopped traffic in both directions, then a semi-truck reportedly hit one of the vehicles, totally blocking traffic on the southbound side of the highway. The CHP Traffic Incident Information Page said there was one person trapped with major injuries last night, and an air ambulance and ground rig were called into the area.

A new report says crime has been down in Fort Bragg during the pandemic. Police report crime data biannually, and this is the year. The City Council heard the presentation Monday night which Mendo Voice reports showed a steady downturn of crime the last four years. The news site also reported the amount of calls for service, arrests, and violent crimes; robbery, theft and vehicle theft were also down. A huge decrease in gang-related calls too, down 90% during the same period. DUI's stayed pretty much the same though. The report also said about half the police department had been infected with Covid-19 over the first two years of the pandemic, but it was like one at a time, not an outbreak.

Yosemite National Park has announced you'll need a reservation to visit this summer. There is apparently some worry there could be massive traffic because there are a lot of construction projects happening all at once inside the park. So, from May 20th to Sept. 30th there will be a limit on the number of visitors who will need to get online reservations to enter.

Lake County finally has a new Public Health Officer. At their Board of Supervisors meeting this week, the board voted unanimously to hire Dr. Erik McLaughlin as the new Public Health officer. After a closed door session, the announcement was made. The doctor currently lives in Las Vegas and will serve 80% of the time, but no start date was given. He also does not yet have his medical license, so it's dependent on that. He is however licensed in Vegas as a family physician. He has a medical degree from a school overseas that's not listed as approved by the Medical Board of California. The last Public Health Officer resigned a year ago and has served as an interim officer, along with a couple others.

A couple of lawmakers along with the state Insurance Commissioner have introduced legislation to have an advance warning and ranking system for extreme heat waves. State Assembly Members Luz Rivas of the San Fernando Valley and Eduardo Garcia of Coachella working with Commissioner Ricardo Lara and two State Senators. Lara reportedly came up with the idea with the state Climate Insurance Working Group who authored a report last year to protect more vulnerable Californian citizens due to the impacts of climate change.

Some locals and local dignitaries take to the streets in Ukiah to help pick up trash. Last weekend, Maureen Mulheren apparently gathered friends to help load garbage bags with trash. They wrangled the police chief, who helped with his truck and trailer, as they cleared an area along Brush Street near the Daniel Steel building which is frequently strewn with trash. The truck was taken to the Ukiah Transfer Station to unload. Mulheren used to be a Ukiah City Councilmember and is now on the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors.

The California Coastal Conservancy is going to start managing the Great Redwood Trail. This is the proposed 320-mile trail along the old rail tracks that connect the San Francisco Bay Area to Humboldt Bay. Right now the North Coast Rail Authority is managing it. But it was apparently decided a state agency should manage it instead. So starting this summer, the Coastal Conservancy, who have expertise in California trails and years with the California Coastal trail itself will take over. Starting March 1st the North Coast Rail Authority is also changing its name to the Great Redwood Trail Agency for the work.

A man from Upper Lake found guilty of murdering a woman in 2017 will be sentenced next month. As you may recall Willy Tujays Timmons was accused of murdering the mother of his children, partner Vanessa Niko. He's been charged with murder, inflicting corporal injury with a prior conviction within seven years, causing permanent disability, and torture. Some of the charges from another incident in 2016. There was a jury trial last year where he was convicted and it was referred for sentencing. He was in court via video with the case set to be back in court the end of the month and sentencing March 2nd. He's in custody awaiting his fate.

Congressman Mike Thompson has reported filed to run for re-election in the newly drawn Congressional District 4. After each US Census, congressional and other political districts are redrawn to balance the amount of people in a district. District 4 includes all of Lake and Napa Counties and parts of Solano, Sonoma and Yolo Counties. He says he's a native, born and raised here and considers it the honor of his life to represent the region.

For information about the newly drawn and numbered Fourth Congressional District visit [https://www.wedrawthelinesca.org/final\\_maps](https://www.wedrawthelinesca.org/final_maps). For more information about Congressman Mike Thompson's campaign, visit <https://www.mikethompsonforcongress.com/>

A new plan about how to take on the COVID19 pandemic moving forward is emerging from the Governor's office. It's about living with the virus, not being able to go back to normal, or before times, as it were. The state's health secretary, Dr. Mark Ghaly says the state's focus now will be to be prepared and ready because there could be another strain coming. And it could be stronger. The new protections of living with an endemic, not a pandemic, a day after the state dropped its latest indoor mask mandate. The state is set to also announce mask rules for schools Feb. 28th. Dr. Ghaly said the state will stay vigilant and monitor for other possible airborne diseases as it works to improve the state's public health system as a whole.

There are a couple of new officers in the Clear Lake CHP office. Lake Co News reports Jared Wade and Zach Cornel were part of the latest academy of over 140 new officers who just graduated 2 weeks ago from West Sacramento. While at the academy, they studied for almost 7 months then were officially sworn in February 4th. The two new Clear Lake officers will be getting on-field training with other officers who've been on the job a while before they go out in the field solo.

A quick arrest after a bank robbery in Willits. The Mendocino County Sheriff's Office says Jonathan Sales was picked up just a block away from the Chase Bank on S Main Street just before 3:00 on Wednesday afternoon. Cops say a man, who tellers later identified as Sales, walked into the bank, demanded cash, and fled with the loot. The crime was also caught on the bank cameras. When Mendocino County Deputies spotted the suspect they say he tried to resist, so they had to unholster their Tasers to take him down. Reports say officers found an undetermined amount of stolen money and that Sales gave incriminating statements. He is now locked up in the

02/18/22 county jail on robbery charges

A man from Ukiah has been convicted of murdering his stepson and trying to kill another man. The Mendocino County District Attorney's office says 66-year-old Thomas Jones formerly of Talmage, was found guilty on Thursday of special circumstances premeditated murder of stepson Jamie Wilcox in September 2020. Jurors also found Jones guilty of trying to kill Wilcox's spouse, Jamie Garden as the two victims prepared to leave the family campground to go to work. Jones faces mandatory life in prison because of convictions for three armed robberies in Lake County and three others in Sonoma county back in the late 1970s. County Court Judge Keith Faulder will impose that sentence on March 27. Jones ignored the court's advice and represented himself at his trial.

Planners in Fort Bragg will have a public hearing next week to discuss amending the city's cannabis regulations. Among the changes—cannabis dispensaries would require a 100-foot buffer around schools and youth centers, and the shops could only be open between 7:00 AM and 7:00 PM. There would also be some changes to zoning and land use standards. The recommendations are part of an initial study done by the City of Fort Bragg Community Development Department and the Metropolitan Planning Group. The Planning Commission hearing is scheduled for next Wednesday at 6:00 PM at Fort Bragg Town Hall, on Main Street. You can look over the proposal and the rest of the commission agenda on the city web page.

Another step toward developing property at the old airport in Clearlake. The Clearlake City Council has extended a consulting agreement that could lead to a master plan and an agreement about the 40-acre site of the former Pearce Field on Highway 53. The city has had an eye on building a large shopping center there for several years. The vote extends the contract with the consultant signed earlier this year. Lake Co News reports City Manager Alan Flora told the council at its meeting on Thursday he hopes the consultants can come back by April with more information to hand over to developers. The council approved the extension unanimously.

The Mendocino-Lake Community College District says it has saved local taxpayers \$12.7 million dollars by refinancing some general obligation bonds. The district says a similar refi back in 2015 saved more than \$37 million. MLCDD was able to get a lower interest rate because of an increase in its credit rating, resulting in cashback. Moody's Investors Service, which issues those ratings, says it gave the district a higher score because of a solid increase in its tax base. Officials say they decided to pass the savings back to local taxpayers. The bonds were issued in 2014 to build the North County Center in Willits, Lake Center in Lakeport, The Library/Learning Resource Center in Ukiah, and to make facility improvements. Voters approved that spending in 2006.

Just in time for Presidents Day weekend, the Mendocino National Forest has opened several developed recreational campgrounds and trailheads. Some campgrounds and trailheads though remain closed due to safety hazards from the 2018 Ranch Fire and 2020 August Complex fire. Officials say while they want everyone to have a good time outside, they want park visitors to make smart decisions and be well prepared for the woods. The forest service website has a list of what is open and closed.

California lawmakers will take up a bill to prioritize wildlife crossings on state highways. Sponsors say better crossings would help both animals and drivers. The Safe Roads and Wildlife Protection Act would require Caltrans to identify barriers to wildlife movement as they plan transportation projects and to implement at least 10 projects per year that improve what the bill calls — wildlife connectivity. Assemblymember Laura Freeman says highway construction has cut off several species from their natural habitats and mating areas. She says that has led to inbreeding and genetic isolation for the animals. Of course, HITTING an animal is no fun either. One study showed More than 44,000 wildlife-vehicle collisions on California roads from 2016 to 2020, resulting in fatalities, injuries, and property damage.

The US Department of Education has awarded a 1.7 million dollar grant to bring back the music program at four elementary schools in the Konocti Unified School District. The one-time funding comes from the department's Assistance for Arts Education program. The Konocti District was one of the only 27 chosen from 96 that applied from across the country. The grant will be used to start the Online Rural Arts and Music Program or ON-RAMP at the Burns Valley, East Lake, Lower Lake Elementary, and Pomo Elementary schools. Band Director Katherine Wiley tells Record-Bee.com that she is ecstatic about the grant. She says students deserve music education in their schools. The federal funds will be spread out in even increments over the next four years.

The state says almost a third of the properties hit by last year's Cache Fire Lake County are now clear of debris. Those property owners had enrolled in the statewide Consolidated Debris Removal Program. They can now work with the county to start getting permits to rebuild. 78 properties are part of that Debris Removal program, administered by the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services. With the debris gone, 24 are now moving closer to reconstruction. The fire last August burned 83 acres and destroyed dozens of properties south of Clearlake.

California State University Chancellor Joseph Castro is OUT. Castro resigned from that job because of accusations that he mishandled some sexual abuse and intimidation cases in his previous job as President at Fresno State. Castro was hired as the first Mexican-American leader of the University System, which is the biggest in the country, just last year. Cal State Trustees accepted that resignation after a day-long meeting in private. In a statement, Castro said while he doesn't agree with media reports of his actions, he felt it was in the best interest of the University system for him to go. Those reports claimed Castro was aware of at least seven harassment cases at Fresno State but failed to discipline the high ranking university official alleged to have been involved.

A man and woman from Covelo have been arrested in connection to a carjacking. Round Valley Tribal Police and Sheriff's Deputies on the scene last Wednesday afternoon for a report of a possible carjacking of two men. Police and Deputies found the stolen vehicle, but it had crashed and those inside had run from the scene. Police say Harlan Nelson Hawk Williams went to a home where Bridgette Frank was and the two stopped a car, pointing a gun at 2 occupants who were ordered out of the car and onto the ground. One was hit in the head with a firearm. Then they took off. Williams was found later and arrested. He and Frank were identified by the victims who got the car back. Williams was arrested on multiple charges and held without bail and Frank for Robbery and held on \$75,000.00 bail.

02/21/22

A woman from Gualala has been arrested after reports of a burglary. Deputies saw a woman on the home's surveillance video. Colleen Warner was arrested after being identified on the video. She's charged with First Degree Burglary and held on \$50,000.00 bail. A man from Ukiah has been arrested for Elder Abuse. Deputies say an 81 year old woman said she was being yelled at by her 58 year old son, David Thomsen, and he flipped over a table and broke glass and a laptop. He was arrested and found to have a restraining order against him by the woman. It said he could have peaceful contact only, plus he was on probation for elder abuse. He's arrested again for Felony Violation of Probation and Violation of Emergency Protective Order and held without bail.

A man from Ukiah found to have a decade's worth of problems with police has been arrested again. Police found Tony Maples Friday, who they knew from previous contact and knew he had an active warrant. He was detained, then taken to jail and held on \$7,500.00 bail.

A man from Fairfield has been arrested in Willits after a routine traffic stop. Deputies pulled over Darryl Dempsey Friday night. After running a records check, they found he was on federal probation and not allowed to own or possess firearms or ammunition. The Deputy thought he seemed nervous or off somehow so they searched the car, finding a semi-automatic handgun, full ski mask, gloves, a screwdriver, pliers, and a California license plate that did not belong to the vehicle. There was also bolt cutters, a large sledgehammer and a big box of black garbage bags, which all seemed like burglary or robbery tools. The guy was arrested on various charges and held on \$25,000.00 bail.

The state Dept. of Water Resources has granted money to fund a salmon protection project. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife is giving \$1.5 million dollars to Water Resources for a Juvenile Salmonid Collection System Pilot Project. It's to see if they can collect the juvenile fish as part of a reintroduction of endangered winter-run Chinook salmon and other runs of salmon to their historical habitat in the area below the Shasta Dam in the Sacramento River. It's part of a larger plan to reintroduce winter-run Chinook salmon to the cold McCloud River.

In one of several moves due to catastrophic wildfires in Calif., the Governor's office along with the Insurance Commissioners Office working with fire safety experts to help harden homes and businesses against wildfires. The program, "Safer from Wildfires" is a list of achievable, effective actions to try to curb the amount of risk for homeowners including community-wide safety recommendations, so fires don't spread to other properties. The parties involved say it will help to make sure residents, businesses, communities, and insurance companies follow science-driven mitigation efforts to minimize any wildfire risk with a ground up approach. There will be incentives for homes and businesses to harden their properties.

The Gov. has announced a new law so that people impacted by gun violence can sue the manufacturers of assault weapons. Like the Texas law allowing people to sue abortion providers, the proposed Calif. law could allow individuals to sue anyone who manufactures, distributes, transports, imports into the state or sells assault weapons, .50 BMG rifles, ghost guns, or ghost gun kits. And the bill bans advertising certain types of weapons to minors.

A couple of teams of high schoolers had their Mock Trial competition, this time, it was a murder mystery. Two Fridays ago, students were in court in Lakeport for the 10th annual competition in partnership with the Constitutional Rights Foundation, the Lake County Superior Court and Lake County Office of Education. Middletown and Upper Lake high schools competed, and Middletown won. The event was online last year due to the pandemic. The court's judges take turns each year as an actual judge for the competition.

The California State University Chancellor has resigned abruptly. It was an unexpected move by Joseph Castro who left without notice after he was accused of mishandling claims of sexual assault and workplace intimidation against a former colleague while he was the head of Fresno State University. Castro only had one year under his belt as Chancellor. He was also the first Mexican American chancellor of the country's biggest 4-year public university system. The resignation came after closed door sessions of the Cal State Board of Trustees around the accusations.

A woman is dead and four other people have been injured after a head-on crash this past weekend near the Mendocino Coast. The CHP reports the accident Saturday afternoon happened after a driver in a 2010 Toyota Rav4 crossed "for unknown reasons" over to the westbound side and hit a 2020 Honda Accord head on. The man in the Rav4, a 24 year old from Albion had minor injuries and did not have to go to the hospital, but the driver of the other vehicle, a 25 year old man from Martinez ended up in the hospital with moderate injuries. His passenger, a woman, also from Albion died. Two other passengers had major injuries. The CHP reported all in both cars had on seatbelts, and they did not think anyone had been drinking, but they were investigating further.



After a body was found under the 101 last year by State Route 162, the identity of the person has not been known. Police said the man was in women's clothing and had a book on Tarot nearby. The body was found by someone who pulled over to walk their dog north of Willits. Mendo Fever reports the only thing released so far about the body was that it was a man in his twenties. The news site reports the book may have somehow been significant in the case, but police have not confirmed that. The Sheriff's Office reports the man had on a dress, women's denim jeans and black leggings, and a dark heavy jacket and men's leather mid-rise boots. Other descriptors indicate the man was probably White and had "possibly shoulder-length" brown hair and was likely between 5'10"-6'4". There was no known cause of death, but the teeth have been sent in for DNA

02/22/22 information.

A new survey by Mendocino Railway and the Skunk Train show it continues to be the most popular attraction in the county. The Railway's Demographic Survey from 2016 to 2021 and Visit Mendocino County's latest Annual Report showed it also provided great economic support to the local economy, to the tune of over \$67 Million in visitor spending over five years. The Skunk Train's Railbikes are reported to be the number one most-viewed attraction on the Skunk Train website and at visitmendocino.com. And reports say the Skunk Train is one of the stronger economic drivers locally, even while ridership was off during 2020 due to the COVID lockdown of the entire hospitality industry. But 2021 had a great rebound, with historical numbers.

A woman accused of a hit and run that killed a man had her bail reinstated instead of reporting to jail. Mendo Voice reports Gina Ray Bean was sentenced to 210 days in county jail in December for the July 2019 crash that killed Calum Hunnicutt. The news site reports Bean was set to begin her sentence last month, but her lawyer is appealing the conviction, so her bail was reinstated and her surrender date vacated. Court papers say Bean drove into the intersection of State Route 1 and Little Lake Road in Mendocino on a green light, but hit Hunnicutt, who was on a skateboard and had a red light. He was found to be at fault, but Bean left the scene. She was arrested for suspicion of vehicular manslaughter, but later it was reduced to leaving the scene of an accident.

Performance reviews on the agenda for the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors. They will go over performance of various county employees over two days this week. Nine public employees will get evaluations in closed door sessions Thursday and Friday. They are the new Public Health Director and the Public Health Officer, the Cannabis Program Director, Transportation Director, Behavioral Health and Recovery Services Director, General Services Agency Director, Social Services Director, Agricultural Commissioner and Cultural Services Agency Director. The board is also taking public comments on the matter or other agendas before these sessions.

A large commercial cannabis operation is being considered again near Hidden Valley Lake. The Lake County Board of Supervisors appealed the Planning Commission's decision last year, so they will take it up again Thursday. They will once again hold a public hearing to consider the major use permit for We Grow, LLC in Middletown. There will only be nine of 300 acres used for greenhouses, drying buildings, a shed, water tanks and privacy fencing. They also propose removing 130 blue oak trees. The Board of Supervisors didn't like the environmental document on the plan, so there have been some changes.

A local nonprofit is trying to raise money to rebuild trails in the Boggs Mountain Demonstration State Forest which was seriously damaged by the 2015 Valley fire. The Redwood Trails Alliance is calling it the "Bring Back Boggs" fundraiser. They're partnering with the Trail House of Santa Rosa and others to work to rebuild the Demonstration State Forest trails. It's been a popular place for mountain bike enthusiasts and was the spot for years where the Bike Monkey Boggs 8 hour race and the NorCal Interscholastic Cycling League's state championship race were both held. But the fire burned almost 90% of the forest. They're looking for donations and are giving away a mountain bike to get that enthusiasm going. Every \$5 donation gets a chance to win prizes. The deadline to enter is this Sunday at 6 PM. Interested parties can enter to win here at <http://www.trailsalliance.org> or <https://trailsalliance.givingfuel.com/bringbackboggs>

The 2020 Census has triggered the Secretary of State's Office to lower the amount of offered languages on ballots in some precincts this year. The latest Census showed about 40 percent of Californians speak another language besides English at home, over 200 languages and dialects and that about 20% of Census respondents had limited English knowledge. But some say the Secretary of State should not reduce the languages for elections, and that some could lose votes if they can't get money for translators for ballots and other voting information. A letter's reportedly been sent to the Secretary of State by The ACLU California Action, Common Cause California, Asian Americans Advancing Justice California and the Partnership for the Advancement of New Americans saying reducing the number of languages creates obstacles for limited-English proficient voters.

The new Public Health Officer for Lake County has not visited the county yet. The Record Bee reports Dr. Erik McLaughlin and his family have not driven from Vegas to the area due to the pandemic, but he says he's eager to see the area in person and get to know the local community and its citizens. McLaughlin was hired last week after a nationwide search to replace Dr. Gary Pace, who resigned a year or so ago. There have been a couple of floating interim health officers until now. McLaughlin is expected to work about 32 hours/week for Lake County. He's the fifth PHO in five years. The newspaper reports speaking to McLaughlin who said he wasn't surprised by the high turnover due to the area's rural nature. He is expected to be in town before next month pending approval of his medical license. He is licensed in eight other states.

The Public Health Officer in Sonoma County had a DUI. The Press Democrat reports Dr. Sundari Mase pleaded no contest last summer to misdemeanor reckless driving with alcohol involved. The incident happened in December of 2020. Mase was pulled over and arrested in Alameda County for DUI with a prior offense, another DUI from 2014. Apparently that case was dismissed and removed from her records. But the latest arrest makes mention in court papers, to the previous arrest. At the time of the 2020 arrest, Sonoma County was in a restricted lock down due to the amount of COVID cases at the time. Court papers say her blood alcohol measured 0.14. She received a year's probation, was fined \$530 and has to go to a six month DUI course. She was questioned by the newspaper and made a public apology for the offense, saying she made a serious mistake after socializing with a friend and misjudged her sobriety. The Board of Supervisors and Mase's immediate supervisor said they knew nothing about the incident.

The Willits City Council isn't moving forward on a project to be sure the groundwater is staying resilient. They had a two hour meeting with public comment a couple weeks ago and took no action on the Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) for the Groundwater Resiliency Improvement Project. The study has to be done by state law if they're eyeing a project, just like an environmental impact report. This project looking at developing groundwater, giving the city of Willits a secondary water source and help the city meet its water needs. They were looking to add hundreds of feet of piping, upgrade some piping and replace a pump, plus put in a new 250,000-gallon chlorine contact tank at the groundwater treatment facility.

02/23/22

Since there's stormy weather and snow in some passes, Highway 20 was closed while plows could be brought in. Caltrans officials in Mendocino and Lake counties closed the route so it would be safer for travel on both sides west of the Mendocino/Lake County Line near Witter Springs. They brought plows in around dinner time and had cleared one lane. There were also a bunch of cars stuck on State Route 175 between Hopland and Lakeport. After the plows came in on Highway 20 traffic was still slow going.

The state Legislature is reportedly considering mandating all K-12 public schools put COVID-19 testing plans in place for students and staff and earmark the cash to do it. The legislation, if it passes would be for pre-schools, childcare centers and afterschool programs too. It would require the state Dept. of Public Health work with school districts on a testing plan, but it doesn't specify how much testing there would have to be, or anything about vaccines. The money for the new plan would be found later, depending on how many tests school districts already had received from state and federal governments for school testing.

The former Sergeant in the Ukiah Police Department who faces felony sex crime charges is still out on bail even though prosecutors filed to get his bail revoked after a recent arrest. Kevin Murray was recently arrested for petty theft in Lake County, but the judge didn't change his bail arrangement. The prosecution said the recent arrest showed a failure to follow and obey the law, which was a condition of his release. He was charged previously for burglary, sex assault, preparing false evidence and possession of an illegal AR-15 considered an assault weapon under state law. There's also a civil suit against him, filed by a former female colleague who says she was sexually assaulted by Murray too.

A man from the Bay Area suspected in the death of a man may also be involved in a marijuana business robbery near Laytonville. Mendo Fever and Kym Kemp are both reporting LaTrail White is in the Solano County jail where he's waiting his preliminary hearing for murder. But he could also be one of four men from the Bay Area connected to an armed robbery with assault rifles in Sept. of 2020 at the Black Oak Ranch, a community north of Laytonville. Three men, a woman and a girl were reportedly held at gunpoint while the men demanded weed and money. One of them, from out of town was found and hogtied by locals. And apparently White was one of the men, caught the first day by police and found with several assault rifles in a van. But apparently the charges against White were dropped in that case. The alleged murder tied to him happened last summer.

A man pulled over by Fort Bragg police has been arrested. Police say he seemed to be driving drunk last Friday. Michael McSorley was told to get out of his car and found with an un-registered concealed firearm with a high capacity magazine and a concealed dirk/dagger. He would not agree to field sobriety tests so he was arrested. In the car they found a loaded .45 caliber handgun, a glass pipe and a white substance that looked like meth. He was arrested and charged with several crimes and held in jail.

An apartment complex that had been proposed for low income farm laborers and wildfire victims in Lakeport has been approved by the federal government. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has reportedly given the green light for the exemption for the 48-unit Martin Street Apartments, phase two. And this phase could be ready for folks to move in this summer. The developer got agriculture housing credits so they were supposed to have tenants who were farm laborers, but apparently they only rented two units. So last summer, after the Cache fire broke out, the city asked developers if survivors of the fire could move in and were told no, but then they reached out to the fed anyway to see. They ended up getting a waiver after the city got in touch with Congressman Mike Thompson's office.

The Ukiah Planning Commission is considering an application for a cannabis dispensary near City Hall. The documents related to the proposed business on Seminary Avenue say the retailer would sell cannabis products and deliver them. The building is the former Mixies restaurant and near the Ukiah Civic Center and the Veteran's Hall. They'll be checking zoning codes at the meeting on Zoom today. A cannabis business is not allowed to be near a school, one is close, but far enough away. And it can't be near any other youth-oriented facility, which of there are many, but they too are far enough away. There are some other limitations too, all to be discussed this evening.

The Planning Commission meeting is at 6 p.m. at the following link: <https://zoom.us/j/9171500000>

The annual report on Cannabis sales for medical use has been released. The group Americans for Safe Access released the report looking at how each state's programs work and how effective they are. They base it on 100 categories like access, affordability, health and social equity, and product safety. The annual report is distributed to state lawmakers and several hundred health organizations and patient organizations. And they come up with solutions to problems with legislative and regulatory language. California has been in the medical marijuana business for 25 years. The agency says it works to ensure safe and legal access to cannabis for therapeutic use and research. You can read the state of the states report at their website.

PG&E has permission to raise their rates. Starting Tuesday, the energy company will bring rates up to over 8% more for small businesses. Just 2 weeks ago the Public Utilities Commission voted unanimously to allow the company to bring rates up beginning March 1st. A spokesperson for PG&E says they had to raise rates because of recent drought conditions which lowered the cost of hydroelectric generation across the western U.S., and higher natural gas and wholesale electricity. All of this from last year but was predicted to continue this year. And a report from the PUC in May of last year also said the company's rates would probably increase by nearly 4% between 2020 and 2030. The Press Democrat has also reported various other California investor-owned utility companies rates had also risen.

A cannabis business is proposed at a site on South State Street and two buildings will be torn down to accommodate it. The Daily Journal reports that demolish request went through quick, but not so much for the old Dragon's Lair building. The two buildings to be torn down to make way for a new dispensary are in the 1100 block of South State Street at Talmage Road. In just two weeks the city council approved the move. The Community Development Director Craig Schlatter told the paper the Dragon's Lair building is listed in the city's Historic Resources Survey, so it's taking longer to be removed. The city has to complete certain studies before the building is demolished to be sure it won't hurt the environment or historic resources.

02/24/22

A man from Rohnert Park received a decade behind bars for the death of his brother-in-law. The Mendocino County DA reported 24-year-old Oscar Ruiz got 120 months in state prison after agreeing to a plea deal last month for voluntary manslaughter and the personal use of a firearm. The DA's office says he shot and killed his in law last July after an argument at an illegal marijuana grow north of Laytonville where they were employed. The DA says Ruiz may only have to serve 85% of the sentence if he gets time off for good behavior.

A man connected to both Redwood Valley and Talmage is going to prison for life, without the possibility of parole for a murder last year. The DA posted on Facebook that Jameson Wolfgang Jackson's sentencing was stalled for six months, but yesterday he received life without parole and an additional 32 years to life after he was found guilty last August for first degree and attempted murder in the first degree. The jury found he fired a gun intentionally from a car. The DA reminds it was not his first violent conviction, that as a minor he was sent to prison for the robbery and murder of a shop owner in Brooktrails. He was paroled on his 23rd birthday in 2008, and no longer on parole by 2010.

Reports late last night of a fire near Guerneville. The Press Democrat reported the fire on Old River Road and that firefighters had to hike to the rugged area. They reported a bulldozer was also pulling into the area around 9 p.m. and driving a line around the 2-acre fire so firefighters could reach the fire early this morning.

The federal government says they're not allocating water to farmers in the central valley as the state hits another year of severe drought. The regional director for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation said it will be devastating, but we need rain. The fed operates the Central Valley Project, which is made up of dams, reservoirs and canals. It's one of a pair of systems providing water for agriculture, drinking water, and the environment. The other is run by the state government. Each February the federal government announces how much water they'll allocate for their contracts and updates its allocations all year long according to local conditions. Last year farmers in the valley only got 5% of the allocation from the federal government but it changed to 0% as the drought got worse. This year starts at 0%, but water for other uses, including drinking and industrial, is at 25%.

A new affordable housing project for senior citizens has been approved in Lakeport. The city's Planning Commission gave the greenlight yesterday for the Bevins Street senior apartments. AMG & Associates are developing the 40-unit complex on 3 acres. The income bracket is from 30 to 60% of Lake County's median income. It's also near another senior housing center, Bella Vista, which was built by the same developer, their 4th project in Lakeport. The new project will be 32 one-bedroom homes and eight two-bedrooms. They will each have either a patio or a deck. They also plan on putting up a community center that has a kitchen inside, an exercise room, laundry facility and business center, community garden bocce ball court, a fenced dog park, parking and a covered picnic area.

A truck found last week near Hopland along the Russian River was reportedly stolen. The

pickup found last Friday was reported stolen to the Hopland Fire Protection District whose Chief says the call was that there was a vehicle in a tree that couldn't be seen from the highway near Frog Woman Rock. Since it was so close to the river, swift water swimmers searched just in case there may have been someone inside, but nobody was found. Firefighters reported the truck rolled about 300 feet down an embankment, and the CHP is investigating the crash. The truck was reported stolen from Ukiah about a week before.

An online petition to save a 500-pound bear in California is halfway toward its goal. Supporters are also calling police in South Lake Tahoe to the point it's becoming a problem. Police are asking them to stop, saying they have no control what happens to "Hank the Tank." The bear still hasn't been found after breaking into 40 homes since last summer in the search for food. The 'People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals' says it will help officials find him a home and a sanctuary in Colorado has offered to take the bear.

Police in Ukiah say they're getting a bunch of calls about stolen cars. Police say the majority of the vehicles were unlocked and unattended, while in front of homes to warm them up. Police are calling these "warm-up thefts" because what they have in common was they were out on a cold morning that the car was running. They say they get it's inconvenient to sit in a cold vehicle, but it would be worse to have the vehicle stolen. They say you can just use a bath towel or other fabric to your windshield the night before or get a windshield cover. They also say you can visit the AAA website and search. Police say they just want to raise awareness to residents who are looking to actively warm up their cars on cold mornings.

The Governor and the President speaking about Climate Change and other issues. Newsom and President Biden talked with community, labor, and industry leaders about the state's clean energy sector. They spoke about recent work to develop lithium, a major part of batteries needed for zero emission vehicles, clean electric grids, and other renewable energy sources. The Imperial Valley is a source and they're now calling it the Lithium Valley. Newsom called the area a game changer for the country's transition to clean energy and zero-emission vehicles, which Newsom says is a critical breakthrough in the fight against climate change.

The Lake County Planning commission has said no to a large cannabis operation planned near Hidden Valley Lake. The county staff had recommended that the project be denied. We Grow LLC wanted to put that operation on 309 acres in Middletown. Lake Co News reports it would have included 34 greenhouses, four drying buildings, a shed, 20 water tanks, and privacy fencing. Area residents appealed an earlier approval last year and won their case based on a faulty environmental document. Developers resubmitted their application, but now that too has been denied. The sticking point was a plan to cut down 130 mature blue oak trees that would have been replaced, but the commission didn't think the replacement plan was sufficient. There were other concerns too, including traffic, security, and land use. The lawyer for the developer argued that the planning commission was unfair to his client, who he says did everything the commission asked. There is a seven-day window to appeal that denial.

02/25/22

You may have done it before. It's a cold morning. You go out to start your vehicle, leave it running to warm up, and step back inside—for just a minute. Ukiah police say THIEVES could end up driving off in that warm car instead. The Police Department says it has received numerous reports of stolen vehicles over the past two months and most were running and unattended. Police say they get that it is inconvenient to sit in the car as it warms up, but that is MORE inconvenient to have your car stolen. Cops say car thieves love cold mornings and empty cars, which could be gone in 30 seconds. The UPD suggests other ways to keep the vehicle's windshield from icing, on cold mornings. Cheapest way – put a bath towel, or similar type of fabric on the windshield the night before. You can also buy windshield covers available at retail stores or online. Triple A dot com has more tips on how to keep yourself safe from car thefts.

Safety of a different kind is the goal of a new policy from CalTrans. CalTrans Director Toks Omishakin has unveiled those new guidelines, which he says commit his department to make roads safer and reducing—and even eliminating—fatal crashes by 2050. He calls it a fundamental shift to make safety the first priority in highway planning, operation, construction, and maintenance. There will also be a shift to focus on preventing the worst crashes, not ALL crashes. Omishakin says the new policy lines up with a new safety initiative the US Department of Transportation started in January. In California, more than 3,600 people die each year in traffic crashes and more than 13,000 people are severely injured. Figures from last year show a 17 percent increase in highway deaths from the year before—even though fewer people were driving during the first months of the pandemic.

We told you about a petition to save the bear, Hank the Tank in the Lake Tahoe region. Apparently, the bear had broken into several homes looking for food. But now we get word, Hank is actually three bears. DNA evidence shows the 500-pound black bear is at least three bears who have ransacked homes so the state Department of Fish and Wildlife is going to start trapping bears, then tagging them so they can continue collecting genetic info on the animals. They will release them to “suitable habitat” and say they have no plans to euthanize the animals. One of the Hanks is blamed for smashing a window at a home while people were there. There have been over 150 incident reports related to the bears in Northern California and Nevada.

A new report says wildfires were worse at night over the last twenty or so years, especially that ones that burned in California and the western United States. The Univ. of Boulder and University of Merced joint study showed night fires were as much as 7% more intense globally between 2003 and 2020. And they were 28% more intense in the western US during the same time. They used satellite and climatological data for the study. Researchers say the changes are mostly due to the drought and drier fuels in Calif. and the western US. The study says there are now about 11 more flammable nights a year than there were back in 1979 across the western United States, a 45% increase.

There's a new traffic light up at the intersection of Waugh Lane and East Gobbi Street. It's not on yet but should be by this spring. The Public Works Director says the signal should be in working order by the end of April. It was put there due to traffic congestion on Gobbi Street. The report on the work by city staff says after a Citywide Circulation Study in 2007, it was recommended the city put in either a roundabout or traffic light where East Gobbi and Waugh Lane meet. So the city went to the Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG) as part of the 2011 Regional Improvement Program (RIP) to get the money for the work, and won \$716,000. There will also be a traffic signal installed at East Gobbi and Main streets.

A man from Talmage has been convicted of murder for the shooting death of his stepson. The Mendocino County DA's Facebook page had the conviction posted. The post says 66 year old Thomas Dean Jones was found guilty of first-degree murder for the death of his stepson, Jamie Eugene Wilcox. He's also been convicted for first-degree attempted murder in the shooting of Jayme Schneider Garden, his stepson's wife. The jury found he shot them both for financial gain. The pair shot in a car and Jones was waiting for them, so it was premeditated. The DA reports Jones will be sentenced next month and faces life without parole in state prison for the Sept. 2020 murders.

Assemblyman Jim Wood has a new bill in the Legislature to help improve drought conditions. The Santa Rosa lawmaker's bill would create a dedicated Drought Section as part of the Division of Water Rights to change the way the state responds to drought conditions and climate resiliency. Wood says the drought has not been an "episodic event... for decades". He says now when they come, they're longer, happen more often, are more severe and "seriously threaten the health of rivers and streams, wildlife and their habit and the ability to provide North Coast communities with safe and affordable drinking water.

Reports of a black Corvette weaving in and out of traffic, driving up to 120 miles an hour through both Mendocino and Lake counties triggers a BOLO alert for the car and driver. Scanners blared out what was happening in Mendocino County's north hill country to Clear Lake. Kym Kemp reports the CHP went after the Vette, but pulled back when it became too unsafe. But two hours after the pursuit began the driver was found after that BOLO was issued. It started around dinner time. A Black man wouldn't stop after officers first saw the car without license plates north of Willits. That's when the pursuit began.

State Senator Mike McGuire, Mendocino Supervisor John Hashak and the Sheriff Matt Kendall are holding a virtual town hall. They're focusing on Hashak's district, in the northern region of the county next Wednesday, March 2nd. McGuire is hosting the meeting with Hashak and Kendall joining.

When: Wednesday, March 2nd at 6:30 pm. Email McGuire's office or call 707-468-8914.

No bull kelp harvesting allowed on the Mendocino and Sonoma County coasts. The California Department of Fish & Wildlife put a three year moratorium on the harvesting to protect the kelp. Plus they placed a yearly 8,000 pound limit for Humboldt and Del Norte counties too. A report by the agency says over 90% of North Coast kelp forests have disappeared over the last decade so they're putting projects in place, per a report last month, focusing solely on a marine algae species. Regulators also have an option to extend the moratorium if need be. Mendo Voice reports the Intertribal Council supports the move.

A Cannabis dispensary has been approved near Ukiah City Hall. The Planning Commission unanimously gave their approval for the permit. One commissioner said Cannabis needs to be normalized even though it's pretty close to a building where they hold Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous meetings; and they had letters of concern. The Daily Journal reports the City Planning Manager said there's nothing in the city code to prohibit a dispensary from being that close to recovery meetings, but maybe something they can address in the future. The owner of the building, the permit applicant, said he would be respectful and not put up signs that scream marijuana for sale and chose a name, that could also be mistaken as the name of a restaurant, Local Roots. The Planning Commission Chair said she was concerned about the proximity to the recovery meetings, but

02/28/22 less after the discussion they all had.



The Sonoma County Public Health Officer has reportedly had a call with a couple reporters and the Sonoma County Supervisor Lynda Hopkins. Hopkins agreed to the reporter call first, Friday and posted about it on Facebook, and Public Health Officer Sundari Mase asked to join the call. She first apologized to Hopkins for misleading her about a DUI conviction she had after the Press Democrat reported on it last week. The DUI was in December of 2020. But she also had one in 2014. Mase had told Hopkins about it but said it was distracted driving. Hopkins said Mase undermined her faith by not admitting the 2014 arrest was also alcohol related. Mase said she regretted not being more transparent, but had no alcohol problem and they were off duty arrests and wants to keep her job. The Board of Supervisors will take up the matter at their meeting tomorrow.

Mendocino County could go maskless soon. During his regular Friday address, the county Public Health Officer Dr. Andrew Coren said cases were down locally and schools had a huge drop in cases. Also, Coren said the state is expected to make an announcement about mask wearing in schools today. But Coren says he's keeping Mendocino County's mask mandate in place, but expects to call it quits for facial coverings in the weeks to come, saying possibly by March 15th. He says it's because there are still people being hospitalized and ending up in the ICU, and there are not a lot of hospital beds available at the moment. There were also three more deaths reported last week. The state currently mandates masks be worn in nursing homes, hospitals, schools, public transit, and other congregate living situations. Those unvaccinated still have to wear a mask in most indoor settings.

At a special Mendocino County Board of Supervisors meeting, it's cannabis on the docket. The board is having a meeting Wednesday to take up cannabis cultivation, sales and the state of the current market, including the drought, permitting and possible grants. On the agenda they mention changing the name of the program too, to the Mendocino County Cannabis Dept., instead of the Mendocino County Cannabis Program, now that it's its own department, separate from both the agricultural and planning and building services departments. The board will also consider a new appeals process for those turned down for permits, look at grants provided by the state and the possible creation of an extended "stay-of-cultivation" and tax relief for permitted farmers, an idea of Supervisor John Hashak so those farmers are allowed to temporarily stop growing, but maintain their permit, with a so-called "stay-of-cultivation" -paying no taxes or other costs of compliance.

The Red Bearded Burglar in court and pleaded guilty to assault of a police officer with a deadly weapon. William Evers had been on the run after the May 2021 incident where he was reported to have fired a gun after running from a burglary in Elk. He had two previous strikes against him for other crimes, so he is now a three strike felon, facing 25-years-to-life in prison. During the time from when he was on the run to when he was finally caught there were nearly 20 other charges, but apparently they were all dropped as part of a plea deal. He was finally caught last November after first being seen days before in someone's veggie garden. He was charged with the attempted murder of a deputy, grand theft of a firearm, destruction of private property and 15 counts of burglary. He's set to be back in court for his sentencing March 24th.

Protections for gray wolves are back in place after the Trump administration took them off the Endangered Species list. That means it's against the law to hunt or trap the animals unless you're in the northern Rocky Mountains. A federal judge issued the ruling last week saying the delisting of the wolves didn't take into account a reasonable interpretation of the 'significant portion of its range' standard. So the protections are back in place for the Great Lakes region, in West Coast states and in the southern Rocky Mountains. It comes after a lawsuit was filed by several environmental groups by Earthjustice.

A man in Ukiah has been arrested after a traffic stop on a motorcycle. Deputies found Yecson Delaherran-Rivera last Tuesday at North State Street and Gibson and found the motorcycle had a bogus registration on it and had been reported stolen out of Santa Rosa. Plus the guy had a couple of warrants out for his arrest from Mendocino County. So, they arrested Delaherran-Rivera. When they went to arrest him, they also found suspected methamphetamine and a meth smoking pipe, so additional charges were tacked on. He was booked into jail and held on \$27,500.00 bail.

Assemblyman Jim Wood has introduced Legislation to require the CA Public Utilities Commission work on getting broadband internet to a population without. The Assembly bill would map last-mile connections from the open-access middle-mile network. Wood says by mapping how homes are able to use the middle-mile is the only way to keep a promise of equal access to broadband and finally end the digital divide. It follows another bill last year to approve construction of the middle-mile network in the state right-of-way. You can find a map of the proposed network online at the California Department of Technology's website.

A woman in Redwood Valley has reported being attacked by someone who was a regular customer of hers at a restaurant where she used to work. The Mendocino County Sheriff's Office reports getting a call the woman was home alone when someone knocked. She just cracked the door open thinking it was a roommate, when the door was forced open, Deputies say Adrian Herrar-Candaneda came into the home uninvited, got into the woman's bed and covered himself and wouldn't leave. She says he wouldn't leave and grabbed her and placed her on his lap, thinking she was about to be raped, she got away. She texted her roommates, one came home and chased the guy out of the house. Herrar-Candaneda was booked into the Mendocino County Jail and held on \$20,000.00 bail.

A man in Laytonville has been arrested after reports by a family their nine year old child had been sexually abused from a year before. Detectives took a report from the family and investigated, identifying the suspect as Wilmer Jack Mitchell, who they say had recurring access to the child. They say evidence gathered confirmed there had been multiple acts of sex abuse from 2020 until now. Mitchell was arrested for Continuous Sexual Abuse of a Child Under 14 years of Age and held on \$200,000 bail.

A man from Covelo has been arrested for having an outstanding warrant from the Willits area. A Deputy saw two people in a car and confirmed the car they were in had multiple vehicle code violations. The Deputy ran a records check on the vehicle's occupants and found Carlos Hernandez Acosta had a felony warrant for his arrest for weapons violations. The two allowed for a search, but no drugs or weapons were found. So, Hernandez-Acosta was arrested for the warrant and booked into the Mendocino County Jail and held on \$15,000.00 bail.

Schools across California will ditch masks starting next week. After the state announced they would also start to recommend, but not require masks for all indoor spaces. The Governor, along with the Governors of Oregon and Washington announced yesterday the mask mandate would be dropped in schools next Tuesday, March 12th. The California Department of Public Health is still strongly recommending masks in schools though. Jeff Freitas with the California Federation of Teachers applauds the move but hopes local districts will keep equity in mind when deciding whether to drop the mandate.

03/01/22

:11 "Our Black and Brown communities have been higher hit with COVID rates, higher hit with deaths, and lower vaccination rates. And the school districts that are serving those communities need to keep that in mind when they are making that decision."

Tag: San Francisco schools are keeping the mandate for now and L-A Unified may have to also because of their labor agreement. More than 1-thousand school districts are free to re-evaluate their policies.

Second Cut: The change brings California in line with recent updated guidance from the C-D-C. Freitas says the schools need to keep on providing high-quality masks for teachers and students who wish to wear them.

:11 "There are many people that have autoimmune situations or higher risk. They need to continue to wear masks and it needs to be OK. Schools need to create an environment where people don't feel harassed if they continue to wear masks."

Tag: Schools are advised to continue their push to get more students vaccinated and to offer free testing.

A man in Ukiah's busted for domestic violence after a call to the Sheriff's Office. A young woman reportedly called dispatch to report her boyfriend, Victor Tinajero was driving with her and they got into an argument as he was operating the car. She says he got angry and hit her in the face with a closed fist and pulled her hair. She says she tried to make a call for help but he tossed her phone in the back of the car. The woman had injuries matching the story so Tinajero was arrested for domestic violence battery, battery with serious injury and damaging/destroying a wireless communication device and held on \$75,000.00 bail.

A man in Hopland's behind bars after a family fight. The Mendocino County Sheriff's Dept. reports getting a call to the home after reports a woman had hit her uncle in the arm with a stick and may have broken his arm. But they say when they got there, they found the woman had gone outside to try to calm a situation with her uncle, identified as Burt Sloan and other family members, and that she was hit with either a bat or stick before the uncle left the scene. They got her to the hospital and arrested Sloan at another address. He's held on assault with a deadly weapon charges and \$30,000.00 bail.

A large raise coming to some who've retired on the state's dime. CalPERS reports giving the biggest cost-of-living increase for pensions in more than 3 decades, because of high inflation. The 4.7% increases are for cost of living and only for those who were public employees who left the job permanently between 2006 and 2014. The info was posted on CalPERS website last week. The federal Bureau of Labor Statistics reported it was the largest raise since 1990. Other retirees with the plan should get about 2% or up to that 4.7% mark, depending on the year they retired and other provisions in their retirement agreement.

They're talking roads in Clearlake. City staff have requested the City Council talk about ways they can pay for more road projects at their meeting this week. The agenda says the last several years the city's been talking over ways to pay for several road projects so they can speed up the Measure V capital improvement plan. City staff are looking at ways the city can afford to pay for some projects or borrow money for larger projects. The City Manager's notes on the meeting say they're planning to give the council info to look at over the next couple months, but they want to move fast to secure loans with better interest rates. The meeting is 5p Thursday, followed by the public city council meeting at 6p, in person and online.

After a Ukiah patrol officer saw a car near the Motel 6 on State Street early in the morning with someone inside, he approached. The officer says early yesterday morning he saw Taylor Fabisch who he came to find out was on felony probation out of Lake County, with terms including search and seizure. The Officer went through the car and found about 20 grams of suspected fentanyl and a suspected methamphetamine pipe. So Fabisch was arrested and taken to jail. While he was being booked, the officer found a hidden compartment in a ring with fentanyl in it. He's charged with Violation of probation Felony, Bringing a controlled substance into jail Felony, Possession of a controlled substance Misdemeanor and Possession of drug paraphernalia Misdemeanor.

The Lake County Registrar Of Voters Office is reminding the public if you're running for office, the Statewide Direct Primary is coming up in June. It covers Federal, State, Legislative, and County officials, including the County Superintendent of Schools, 2 Supervisor seats for District 2 & 3, the Assessor-Recorder, County Clerk-Auditor, District Attorney, Sherriff-Coroner and Treasurer-Tax Collector. You have to file before Monday, March 11th with your Declaration of Candidacy form and Nomination papers to get your name on the June 7th ballot. For more info on statewide and federal offices also on the ballot, check with the Registrar of Voters office.

A man from Upper Lake has been found guilty for murdering his stepmother last year. Matthew Daniel Mora was convicted Feb. 18th in connection to the death of 56-year-old Christine Mora. He's going to prison for the required term of 15 years to life for second degree murder and has been ordered to pay a \$10,000 fine and restitution for Christine Mora's estate. The murder was one year ago. There was a report of a shooting and investigators found Christine dead with one gunshot wound. Matthew was found at a Super 8 Motel in Upper Lake, drunk. He says he didn't remember the shooting, but the investigation shows he had a years long alcohol problem and was obsessed with guns. He was also in trouble for shooting a gun while drunk in Santa Maria in 2020. He apparently took a gun from a family member in Colorado and had threatened his father with it too. And there were family arguments about his drinking problem prior to the murder.

As we previously reported PG&E raised their prices for small businesses and now they're announcing another raise for homes. Monthly bills are expected to go up by about \$30 a month after the energy giant proposed burying thousands of power lines underground to try to stop catastrophic wildfires from starting. They need to get approval from the state to increase their revenue by as much as \$10.5 billion to bury 3,600 electricity lines. The application sent in to the fed yesterday. The proposal would bring electric bills up by \$31.41 a month for average residential non-care customers, and almost \$21 a month for care customers who have low incomes.

Ukiah police report getting a call about a robbery in progress and a man armed with a tool and a knife. The reporting party told cops they were in the 600 block of Talmage Road and a man was there armed and gave a description of the suspect. When police got there they say they found Marco Fermin-Garcia with a pair of large bolt cutters. Since officers thought he might have a knife they detained him at gunpoint and handcuffed him. The victim had minor injuries and reported he became suspicious after several other burglaries, after hearing a noise and found Fermin-Garcia. He says he grabbed a crowbar because the guy taunted him. He also has surveillance cameras, but the suspect cut the power to them. Fermin-Garcia was booked into jail after police found a knife on him and meth. He's held on \$100,00.00 bail.

Remember that new college that opened up at the old Castle in Lucerne... New Paradigm College? A victim of the pandemic, the school only open a short time before COVID hit. They were offering classes in person, and certificate programs in permaculture and ecology, but closed in the Summer of 2020 after running out of money. The landlord is also reportedly dealing with a property tax dispute with Lake County regarding back taxes on the land and the 75,000-square-foot building. The Romero Institute has pulled out of their partnership with the College too. Administrators say they never really had a chance to get going after the pandemic hit. Former County Supervisor and college co-founder Denise Rushing apparently pulled out of the project in 2020.

The winter snowpack is showing drought. The measurements showed a far below average measurement after two very dry months. Even though we had major storms early this winter, officials say we will have to continue to conserve water. The statewide snowpack measured 63% of normal, with the snowmelt forecast at 66% of average. The manager of the Department of Water Resources snow surveys and water supply forecasting says the snowpack is not near enough to fill up reservoirs and since there aren't any storms of significance on the way, it could be another bone dry year. Even though the statewide reservoir storage is at 73%, the state's largest

03/02/22 reservoir, Lake Shasta, is only 37% full.

The state Dept. of Fish and Wildlife Marine Enforcement Division says there have been a slight rise in the amount of underweight commercial Dungeness crab cases in North Coast waters since December. They say there were five cases of undersize crabs taken in Crescent City and a pair in Eureka. Crab anglers are supposed to measure their whole catch and only hang on to the crustaceans which are equal to or greater than 6 ¼ inches. That's a tad more than the required 5 ¾ width by recreational crabbers. The seven cases were cited and the loads they caught were taken with the sales directly going to the Wildlife Preservation Fund. There were 575 crabs in the seven cases.

Reports of Mountain Lions along the Mendocino Coast. One person reported a large lion grabbing her cat and running off with it. Mendo Fever reports resident Shawnea Bowman who lives northeast of Caspar heard her dog barking, then saw the cat being abducted by the animal. Neighbors had also reported seeing mountain lions prowling around the area over the last several weeks. The news site reports a biologist for the Department of Fish and Wildlife in Mendocino County reported most of the entire state is considered mountain lion habitat. And that if there are deer around, then mountain lions won't be far behind.

Since March is recognized nationally as Social Worker Appreciation Month, in Mendocino County, they're being honored. The Deputy Director of Family & Children's Services says "Social Workers play an important role in helping the most vulnerable members of our community. The agency says last year they reunited 73 children with parents who successfully addressed child safety issues, assessed and approved 45 resource parents to provide care for children in the foster care system and provided services and support to as many as 321 kids, young adults and families a month on average.

If you would like information on a career in social work with Mendocino County, please

visit our website at <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/mendocinoca>.

The superintendent of Middletown Schools is out. After only being on the job for four months, Tim Gill, a veteran educator, has abruptly resigned. Lake Co News reports Gill confirmed the resignation yesterday after starting the job around Halloween. The School District Board President confirmed the letter of resignation was turned in Monday and no reason was given. He also praised Gill for his short turn as Super, saying his passion for education and the dedication he showed to bettering the district was unparalleled and he will be sorely missed. There was also a special board meeting last night to address the issue in a closed door session, followed by open session for the public to comment before the board voted to accept Gill's resignation.

100 local governments and Native American Tribes are getting millions of dollars from the state. The latest round of Clean California grants announced by the Governor for underserved communities is at nearly \$300 million dollars. The money pays to clear litter and clean up public spaces so they're transformed into points of pride. There are 105 community projects the Governor's office says will create about 3,600 jobs as part of Newsom's Clean California initiative. The idea is to pay to beautify spaces with over 1 billion dollars over several years. The multiyear clean-up effort led by Caltrans will remove trash, bring about thousands of jobs and get communities excited about sparkly new public spaces.

The Governor making a statement of support for Ukraine at the same time protecting the interests of residents in Calif. The Governor sent a letter yesterday to the leaders of the California Public Employees' Retirement System, California State Teachers' Retirement System and the University of California retirement system who together make nearly as much as 60% of Russia's yearly gross domestic product. Newsom said the "brazen and lawless" military assault on Ukraine shouldn't be tolerated and the state Constitution explicitly details our fiduciary duties on behalf of hundreds of thousands who invested in these systems. Newsom is looking to restrict Russian access to California's capital and investments. More than \$1.5 billion dollars in the state's investments are held in financial instruments linked to Russia's financial markets.

A seed sharing event at Little Lake Grange a couple Saturday's ago brought the community out. There were tables that had free seeds, bulbs and gardening and seed saving tips were also shared. Vendors set up tables with plants, tinctures and treats to buy. There have been seed sharing events at various granges throughout the county. They also shared with attendees how important it was to be conscious of water use during the drought. They had a panel on drought gardening, which has since been posted on YouTube. The Willits Library has also been handing out free seeds, so if you missed the event at the Grange, you can head over to the Library.

A new survey says Fremont is the happiest place to live in the nation. The report ranked Happiest Cities in America in 2022 at the personal-finance website WalletHub. They looked at the 182 largest U.S. cities and focused on 30 “key indicators of happiness” including depression rates, income-growth rate and average leisure time/day. The Bay Area held three of the top five spots. After Fremont, were San Francisco and San Jose, at 3 and 4 respectively. Santa Rosa was 14th, and Oakland was 16th. The study noted how hard it was for most Americans the last two years due to the pandemic. Overall, California was the 4th happiest state, after Utah, Minnesota and Hawaii.

The Bullet Train’s price tag just got a whole lot steeper. An environmental report drawn up on the high-speed railway pegged it at about \$19 billion dollars more, 40% more than the last draft. The latest cost report released last Friday. The price has continued to increase since 2008 when voters approved the rail line which was touted as providing riders a two-hour, 40-minute ride from Los Angeles to San Francisco. But there have been delays and cost increases that have gone from \$33 billion to as high as \$105 billion for the project. The latest environmental report is for one link in the rail line from the Central Valley to the Bay Area.

The Mendocino County Board of Supervisors in a pickle. They can’t decide, it seems, whether or not to go back to in person meetings. Supervisor John Haschak says they have to meet in person, but Supervisor Dan Gjerde said it should be optional. The outgoing CEO, Carmel Angelo said if the entire board didn’t show up in person, it would look bad. It all has to do with the continuing COVID pandemic. The board took up the matter for a short stretch of the meeting. It was just at the beginning when Haschak spoke out during the affirmation of the consent agenda that all should get back to the board chambers in person, but there should be a hybrid option where people can still call in, saying the public wanted to be together again as case numbers continue to decline. But the board chambers are being renovated anyway and the CEO reminded they couldn’t open back up to the public until about April. They’re set to consider reopening in person again in a couple weeks.

03/03/22

The Humboldt County Sheriff’s Office reports trying to find someone who escaped law enforcement and was on a mental health hold. Yesterday afternoon the patient got away near the Mendocino/Humboldt County line. A spokesperson for the Sheriff’s office says an ambulance was taking the patient for care and escaped, showing a knife in the area of the Cooks Valley Patriot Station, running into a wooded area. The patient, described as a 19 year old man, around 5 foot 9, 212 pounds, with brown hair and hazel eyes, last seen in a dark blue hoodie, blue jeans and a camo hat.

The temporary moratorium on new cannabis dispensaries in Fort Bragg has been extended. The City Council voted Tuesday to extend until only April for a total of six months. It comes after city staff wanted to study the issue longer after a couple of applications for Sunshine Holistics to set up shop but were turned down by the planning commission. The applicant already has a dispensary outside city limits. She was at the meeting and reportedly tried talking the council out of extending the moratorium, reminding them there were loads of empty buildings about town. The mayor even said that extending the moratorium showed the public and local businesses, the council is not business friendly and agreed there were too many empty storefronts.

State and federal fishery scientists have shared the projected abundance report for salmon for the season. At their meeting yesterday they went over the 2022 ocean abundance projection for Sacramento River fall chinook, the main salmon stock in most California waters. They pegged it at just under 400,000 adults, more than last year. And the Klamath River fall chinook abundance forecast was also higher than 2021 with just over 200,000 adult Klamath River fall chinook, but still way below the stock's historical levels.

A man mostly living in Ukiah is going to prison for eight years after pulling a knife on a couple of people outside a restaurant last year. 49 year old Gabriel Patterson reportedly lunged at a restaurant owner and cook last November in downtown Ukiah. But a couple of DA investigators happened to be nearby and defended the businessman and cook. Patterson, known as a local transient was quickly arrested. He already had two strikes against him dating back about thirty years, but the three strikes law has been amended, so he only got 96 months.

The Lake County Sheriff's Office is investigating an incident where they say a parent became upset about a school policy, they have not named, but ended up in an investigation into the parent. The Sheriff's office says on Tuesday a parent supposedly recorded a private chat with a school superintendent without the superintendent's consent. So yesterday they got a search warrant and served it, taking several items. They have not said from where. They say they're trying to figure out if there was a crime committed and are continuing to look into the matter.

A young man from Ukiah has been arrested for drug dealing and possession. Ukiah police say 21-year-old Matthew Riley was seen in a car, seeming to be selling marijuana. A caller gave a description of his car which was found at E. Gobbi St. and Waugh Ln. At the same time a patrol officer saw a vehicle code violation on the guy's car and stopped him. He had other people in the car who were minors. The officer says he could see marijuana and marijuana paraphernalia, so everyone in the car was ordered out. The cop found an assault rifle, with the serial number scraped off, other weapons, three one-pound bags of pot, nearly 80 grams of Cocaine, a bunch of pills, a drug known as Molly, or MDMA, and some CBD. Riley was charged with various crimes including possession and transportation for sale of narcotics, possession of a loaded firearm, carrying a concealed weapon and an assault weapon.

Congressman Mike Thompson says he's working to make sure Californians who have installed solar panels don't get slapped with a higher tax on the panels. Apparently, the California Public Utilities Commission proposed cutting net metering and adding a new tax on solar panels, at a rate of about \$90 more a month, but taking back some of the financial returns from selling excess energy. Thompson says the net metering rate while raising taxes would disincentivize folks from getting solar panels and it would result in penalties for folks trying to do the right thing for the climate. He's asking the CPUC to reevaluate the proposed changes to protect the solar panel industry and ensure the financial benefits remain for those who transition to solar energy.

While conducting their regular meeting, the Lakeport City Council has agreed to a new Local Roadway Safety Plan. The city's Public Works Superintendent says the plan allows local agencies to prepare safety plans which would create a framework to identify and analyze any problems, then recommend how to fix them. As of this past January, agencies must adopt the Local Roadway Safety Plan to be able to get grant money. So, the city can then get Highway Safety Improvement Program money and use city funds on other projects and improvements.



A fire starts after a burn pile gets a bit out of control. The Ukiah Valley Fire Dept. showed up Monday to deal with the pile of vegetation that got away from those burning slash on Sanford Ranch Road. What started out as a four-by-four foot pile rapidly blew up to a 200-foot-by-40-foot fire in a creek bed. Firefighters were able to corral the burn pretty quick. The Battalion Chief says how quickly it burned was definitely concerning this time of year with months of fire season ahead, reminding the public to be very cautious when burning vegetation. A reminder too, to be in the vicinity when the burn pile is active so there's someone to contain it or quickly call firefighters, the sooner, the better.

Mendocino County Public Health is lifting its universal indoor mask mandate. Officials say COVID-19 infections have fallen dramatically in the last 2 months of the Omicron surge, and the stress on our hospitals is coming under control. The CDC shows the county is a high transmission community, so the Public Health office still recommends wearing masks indoors. Dr. Andrew Coren says the community has learned and continues to learn to cope with the pandemic but that we are not done with covid 19. He expects more surges in the future, with at least one new variant circulating and more likely. Federal and California state laws still require masks for everyone in some settings, such as public transit and health care

03/04/22 facilities.

The incoming class at UC Berkeley will likely be a lot smaller after a court ruling. The order to trim the school's freshmen enrollment by 3,000 students to 6,500 comes after a lawsuit by some Berkley residents which contended that more students put too much strain on city services, take up too much housing, and cause too much noise. Lawmakers could step in to exempt the campus from the environmental laws behind the decision. They'll have to move fast though, because Cal has to tell incoming freshmen by March 24th if they're admitted and students have to put down deposits by May 1st for the fall. Opponents of lower enrollment say it will deprive many worthy students of an affordable, high-quality education..

A new Superintendent has already been hired for the Middletown Unified School District. Only a couple of days after Superintendent Tim Gill resigned this week, the Board of Trustees found their new superintendent. Former board member, Thad Owens was chosen after a 90 minute discussion on the topic. The board accepted Gill's resignation Tuesday, after it was tendered Monday, after a short time on the job. Owens resigned the board without reason, much like Gill leaving the Superintendent job. Gill was apparently the Superintendent recorded without his knowledge by a parent, launching an investigation by the Sheriff's office earlier this week. Owens was last known to be the principal for the Konocti Unified School District's Blue Heron Opportunity High School, and had previously been the principal at Middletown Middle School and Minnie Cannon Elementary.

The Governor has a new program, CARE Court, to help those with mental health and substance use issues to get care and services they need. It has to get the approval of lawmakers, but Newsom says it's about acting with compassion to support these individuals, of which he says there are thousands in Calif. The plan is to give treatment to the most severely impacted and untreated and hold patients accountable to their treatment plan. Newsom says the state is acting to "break the pattern that leaves people without hope" which leads them to either become homeless or jailed. He says the approach will stabilize people with the hardest-to-treat behavioral health conditions.

An infant formula the FDA has recalled has reportedly turned up in some Mendocino County homes. That's the word from the public health office who put out notice yesterday about the formula manufactured by Abbott Nutrition. The agency found cans of the recalled formula during in-home visits in multiple communities, Similac, Alimentum and EleCare, which the FDA says could be contaminated. You can learn more about the recall on the FDA website.

- the first two digits of the code are 22 through 37; and
- the code on the container contains K8, SH or Z2; and
- the expiration date is 4-1-2022 (APR 2022) or later

A Ukiah Unified School Board member has resigned. The board put out the word Board Member Molgard resigned yesterday, and they are looking to appoint someone to the board. You must be a registered voter living in Trustee Area Central. Applications are available at the school district's website, or you can call the Superintendent's office of the board office to obtain one. They're due by April 12th. The current board members will interview Trustee Area Central applicants in open session at a special meeting April 28th.

The Mendocino County DA's Office reports a man, formerly of Ukiah is going to prison for several years for child molestation. On the DA's Facebook page, they noted 32 year old Joseph McKee was in court yesterday and sentenced to 16 years in state prison, the maximum for the crime committed. He pleaded guilty early last month to felony continuous sexual abuse of a child. The DA explains that means that the suspect has to have had committed three or more acts of substantial sexual conduct over a period of no less than three months or more with a child under the age of 14 years. The state also deems it a violent crime, so he will only be eligible for a 15% cut of his overall sentence. He will also have to register for life as a sex offender and stay in touch with law enforcement wherever he lives when he gets out of prison.

A woman from Mendocino County has been arrested in Mexico along with a man for having weapons. The Yucatan Times and Daily Mail reported Natalia Baigorri was with a man from Arizona, Devan Young, driving on a highway near Tulum last Saturday. They were found with two 9mm Glocks, a .22 caliber rifle, multiple rounds of ammunition, and the passport of an American. The two are suspected of multiple crimes and for the disappearance of another American. Mexican police also found a sensor that detects if there are security cameras nearby. The passport of the other American was for someone named Lian Zeitz. No word if it's the American who disappeared. Baigorri is from the coastal town of Mendocino. Young is apparently a tribal member of the Erie Indian Moundbuilders in Arizona. The pair haven't been charged or in court yet.

CAL FIRE Mendocino Unit has a new leader. Luke Kendall has taken the reins, overseeing six battalions, about 125 career firefighters, and 200 more seasonal personnel in ten fire stations. The 31 year veteran was sworn in last month. He's the younger brother of our Sheriff, Matt Kendall. The pair grew up in Covelo. Luke has been with CAL FIRE since 1991. He has worked in Boonville and Ukiah, and as a captain in Covelo. He was also transferred for a time to Siskiyou County and was a battalion chief in Scotts Valley.

The woman in Northern Calif., you may recall, said she was abducted at gunpoint some years back, has been arrested. Sherri Papini had turned back up mysteriously in 2016 and claimed she was kidnapped by someone with a gun. But apparently she was shacking up with an ex-boyfriend. The story has gone viral after she was arrested yesterday for lying to investigators in 2020 when she was shown evidence the abduction was phony. She's accused of defrauding California out of over \$30,000 in victim assistance money. There was a nationwide search for her after she left her husband and children. She was found three weeks later on I-5 in Yolo County with a chain around her waist and a brand on her shoulder.

After reports of a fight outside a business in Covelo, deputies reported to the scene, finding a stabbing victim. The Sheriff's office reports getting a call Saturday to the 76000 block of Highway 162 after someone was stabbed in their neck. Round Valley Fire responders reported to the scene and took the victim to the airport, to be transported by an air ambulance out of county for treatment. Deputies say the suspected stabber was a 17 year old male who had been in an argument with the victim. The kid was arrested for attempted murder (664/187 PC) and assault with a deadly weapon (245(A)(1) PC) and booked into the Mendocino County Juvenile Detention Center.

03/07/22

After deputies spotted a man they knew from previous contacts, he was arrested for trying to break into a car. A Sheriff's deputy patrolling in Willits saw William Goforth standing next to a vehicle and trying to pry a metal object into the doorframe of the car. The Deputy thought he was trying to break into the car so he approached and found Goforth had a pistol in his pocket. There were also three concealed knives on him. He was not allowed to own or possess any firearms or ammunition because he's on probation and had a recorded drug addiction. They checked the RV where he's living and found a ghost gun there too. Goforth was booked into jail on various crimes and held on \$15,000.00 bail.

The indoor mask mandate has been lifted in Mendocino County. On Friday the announcement was made by the Mendocino County Public Health Office for the indoor mask mandate to be lifted as COVID cases continue dropping. Dr. Andy Coren says there is still high transmission in the county, per CDC guidelines, so in those areas, where it could be risky, a mask should be worn. It's no longer a mandate though, it's a recommendation. Dr. Coren says the office is happy with the progress, but they do expect there could be more surges of the virus in the future. At the same time the office reminds over 120 people have died in the county, many are still sick, and more still suffer from long term symptoms, or "Long-Covid". The agency reminds the best protection against the disease is getting vaccinated, increased outdoor activities, instead of indoors, and continue to mask up, because they save lives.

An online townhall is being held in Lake County to act against the ravages of wildfires, climate change and drought. The town hall on tree mortality caused by these calamities and bark beetles too. The meetup Thursday night at 6 by the Lake County Community Risk Reduction Authority (LCCRRA), a collaboration County and City governments, Tribal Nations, Fire Protection Districts, water purveyors and other partners.

A former Mendocino County Sheriff's Deputy says he's taking up the matter of still missing Khadijah Britton of Covelo. Former Deputy and Willits Cop, Trent James worked on the case and recently posted a video with details he gathered after Britton's disappearance. The last she was seen was reportedly with her former boyfriend, who family members say kidnapped her. Negie Fallis has been in jail for some time on various other charges. James video is posted on Mendo Fever and says Britton was assaulted by Fallis after she broke up with him, even using a hammer on her. Britton reported the assault, but later rescinded the allegations. James says Fallis kidnapped her days later and she was never seen again. Another woman apparently drove the two somewhere, and James spoke to that woman. James also says there were more than 40 search warrants served and a shallow grave found at Fallis' mom's house. But none of this has been confirmed by Mendocino County law enforcement. James is asking for the community's help finding Britton's body before Fallis potentially gets out of prison by the end of the year.

After reports of flames and smoke by a home in Ukiah, firefighters pop on to the scene, making quick work of it. The report Saturday afternoon of a fire near Ukiah High School. As firefighters arrived, they saw a black plume of smoke. The back deck of a home had caught fire, but the rest of the home was solid and saved from destruction. Mendo Fever also reports a crew of paramedic trainees heard the dispatch call and went during their lunch break to the scene. They apparently broke out garden hoses to help. The fire is under investigation, so far, no word how it started, but it may have been a malfunctioning extension cord.

Local assistance grants are coming to counties due to the drought including Mendocino and Lake. Calif. Is dealing with the third year of drought. The Department of Water Resources (DWR) has announced a sixth round of Small Community Drought Relief program grants. There's \$49 million in funding for over a dozen projects. Several of those for disadvantaged communities, including five Tribes, who will be able to complete infrastructure repairs, well rehabilitation, and pay to haul water. The Manchester Band of Pomo Indians, Round Valley Indian Tribe, Yokayo Tribe in Mendocino County will benefit.

The Lake County Board of Supervisors is considering ending mask mandates in county facilities and reforms to the county's cannabis tax after complaints by those in the industry. The meeting, as always tomorrow morning. It's in person and on Zoom. The Health Services Director Jonathan Portney is presenting a report to the board after the state lifted the mask mandate for most indoor spaces, but they could add a recommendation to mask in certain spaces. Portney is expected to say based on state and federal guidance, and from the new Public Health Officer, that the mandate be dropped in county facilities, but that it's recommended. County staff will also present the board a change, from a cannabis cultivation area tax, into a canopy area, to reduce the tax 15% and other changes, after hearing from cannabis business owners in January.

The Affordable Care Act has offered health insurance to tens of millions nationwide. In Calif., millions may lose their insurance or have to change to new coverage because two federal programs to help folks keep or afford their health plans expire this year. That could impact two to three million Californians who use Medi-Cal for their coverage. They could lose their insurance by this summer after the COVID-19 public health emergency is set to end. That changed recently to next month though. So 150,000 Californians could soon run out of options unless federal subsidies are renewed.

Changes to the Fort Bragg Dog Park are in place. The park is in front of the CV Starr Community Center. It's not any bigger, but the city has apparently helped make adjustments if the weather's bad, fenced in an area where there is all weather safe earth. Plus, they filled gopher holes and there's no dirt, only wood chips. The chips were also treated with a flea and tick solution. Folks who frequented the park in the past led the charge to make it a better hangout for their furry friends. Private fundraising also helped. There was a rummage sale in the CV Starr parking lot which raised thousands, enough organizers say to defray the costs for the city.

Cal Fire has a new chief. The Calif. Dept. of Forestry and Fire Protection announced last week that a 31 year veteran of the agency had taken over. Joe Tyler takes over as catastrophic fires continue burning in the drought stricken state. Some of the worst fires have occurred in the last five years, including the massive Ranch Fire, the August Complex, the Camp Fire and last summer's Dixie. The Governor's office announced Tyler's appointment Friday, the first day on the job as the head of the agency for him. He's the 22nd leader of the department and will be in charge of a \$3.7 billion budget and over 9,600 employees who responded to over 535,000 emergencies last year. Tyler's been with Cal Fire since 1991.

A man has been arrested after reports in Willits of a domestic disturbance. Police went to check after reports a woman had been thrown from a moving car, then chased by the same guy who was assaulting her. Witnesses say Kirk Freitas had picked the victim up and threw her on the ground, plus they say they saw him throw a cell phone at the woman but missed her and shattered their car window. The woman was treated at a hospital and Freitas was arrested on Domestic Violence charges. The couple do not live

03/08/22 in Willits.

A cop looking into a suspicious vehicle report in Willits found two teenagers inside. The officer out late Sunday night noticing a car was in the back of a dark parking lot on the grounds of Brookside Elementary School. One of the people was 18-year-old Luis Vega-Montes de Oca, and a female who gave varying dates of birth, one making her eighteen, the other, seventeen. But it turns out the girl was just 14. Police say she was a victim of the older teen after they met on the social media platform, Snapchat. Vega-Montes de Oca was arrested and booked into the county jail for sexual crimes against the victim including using a foreign object on a victim under 16 and contributing to the delinquency of a minor. She was released to her parents.

After a rate study was commissioned by the Mendocino City Community Services District Board of Directors, they're looking at rate increases. The board deciding on one of four ideas to raise prices. Apparently the wastewater collection rates have been the same for the last seven years and the groundwater management rates are the same for the last four years. They're putting together an ad hoc committee to consider the four options and make a recommendation to the board. A study confirms Mendocino has been in a drought for 2 years. And we're in the 9th driest year on record. There's only been about 21 inches so far this current rain year, about 8 inches below normal.

The day John Hopkins University reported six million worldwide deaths from coronavirus, there are some who say the numbers seem off. Mendocino County Public Health reported 124 residents had died, but the State of California is lagging, posting there were 116 deaths in the county. The county says it's because they've decided to include "probable" COVID-19 deaths in the official count, something the state doesn't do. The Public Health Officer says there were deaths where a COVID test was not available, like in early days, but there was "overwhelming" evidence a person had passed away from the virus.

Several events have been organized by Mendocino College to help promote CalFresh. It was CalFresh Outreach Week February 22-24 so more people could become aware of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and food insecurities, for not only college students, but many in the community. Last month college staff distributed DIY food kits for students to be able to prepare a healthy and easy dish at home. The recipe was provided by a college Culinary Arts Instructor, and included a demo video which was posted to the college website. There were more distributions that week with volunteers from the athletic programs at the Ukiah campus. Food was provided by Redwood Empire Food Bank.

The State Legislature is reportedly working to dump a law to let voters veto public housing projects. But it has a racist backbone. The provision was placed into the state constitution in 1950 so Black families couldn't move into white neighborhoods. There's a majority of lawmakers who believe it should be repealed because of its racist beginnings. Plus they say it's harder to put up affordable housing. They're apparently at a roadblock though because they need financial support to back it changing the California Constitution. Lawmakers have until the end of June to decide if they want to continue to pursue the move.

Money has been secured by the Willits Unified School District for their Expanded Learning Opportunities Program. The District had applied for and won grant funding for the program. At their latest meeting with district representatives and parents, they discussed how the money should be used. It's between about \$800,000 to \$900,000. Apparently it's something the state requires, and the district didn't have a choice, but to participate, but the Superintendent, Joe Aldridge said it's a good program. It's described by the state as a way for low-income, English learners and foster or homeless children to take part in before and/or after-school programs. It covers nine hours of programming a school day for kids in transitional kindergarten to sixth grade.

State Senator Mike McGuire says the state is still trying to hire over 1,000 firefighters more. During a virtual townhall he also said the state's planning to put \$6 billion dollars into bringing high-speed Internet to rural communities. Talking about the firefighters, McGuire said staffing at Cal Fire peaked back in 1975, which is unacceptable. And he says if the state can hire 1,100 or so more firefighters, they can start to close the gap in the firefighter shortage. Then he spoke about expanded Broadband Internet access, calling the project the state's working on "the largest public internet project in American history". He says the state will install fiber along Highway 101, state and county roadways and connect rural hospitals and schools in "every corner of the state", working first to get people with no broadband access, and the underserved next, calling the plan a "game changer for the state."

It's a first, a hemp study, showing its worth as a nationwide crop. It's legal in many places across the country, and in the North Bay, worth hundreds of millions of dollars. The first ever, "Hemp Acreage and Production Survey" (PDF) covers the year 2021. The U.S. Department of Agriculture says they believe hemp that is grown "out in the open" was worth \$712 million nationwide last year. And when it's grown in greenhouses or other protective awnings it had a \$112 million dollar worth. The National Agricultural Statistics Service also said in Calif., it made about \$62.2 million. The crop is legal in Sonoma, Solano, Marin, Napa, Mendocino and Lake counties, and covers over 54,150 acres nationwide.

The now former Chancellor of the California State University system, Joseph Castro, is getting a huge payout. Castro resigned last month after he was accused of mishandling sexual harassment complaints at Fresno State, when he was president. He's getting over \$400,000 the next year and can be a professor at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo too where he had an agreement. It's all part of his settlement agreement with CSU, which was released 2 weeks after his resignation. He was only on the job a short time. He will stay on in the executive transition program, as adviser to the board, for which he will have to be prepared to return to teaching and be available to CSU's board of trustees and executives. He also has to fully cooperate in any investigations, depositions, hearings, trials or other proceedings connected to his time as chancellor or Fresno State president.

Mendocino County is desperate for more Social Workers. During Social Worker month, the county put out a request for more folks to apply. There are 16 openings at the Mendocino County Social Services Department. The county's also offering Social Worker Assistant (SWA) jobs for those interested, while they work on their educational requirements. Mendocino College also has a Human Services Certificate program which is a two year program, setting a student up to take on a career in social work, or other child care related professions.

03/09/22

If you would like information on a career in social work with Mendocino County, please visit the Mendocino County website at <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/mendocinoca>.

Some high school kids in Ukiah are connected to the program with NASA called HUNCH

(High Schools United with NASA to Create Hardware). The students are building brackets for storage lockers to be used by the International Space Station (ISS) in Machine Tool class. The program started 16 years ago so high school students could learn a new skill. They do many different things, besides building tools, like industrial sewing and culinary technology.

To learn more about Machine Shop and Welding at Ukiah High School, contact Jay Montesonti at [jmontesonti@uusd.net](mailto:jmontesonti@uusd.net).

The woman from Shasta County recently arrested for supposedly faking her own kidnapping, has been let out of jail. Sherri Papini's case went viral after police blamed her last week of faking the kidnapping 5 years ago. She was released on \$120,000 bail after being arrested for lying to federal agents for the bogus abduction report and defrauding the state's victim compensation fund for therapy and other costs. She was supposedly jogging when she was taken, but in reality, was with an ex-boyfriend. She said a couple of Spanish speaking women kidnapped her, chained her up, and branded her. She faces 25 years in prison.

As it seems that the worst of COVID19 may be behind us, the state has reported 9 million cases. The LA Times case count reports the total is at around 25% of Californians infected at some point over the last two years. The omicron strain of the virus exploded cases, 44% of them reported over the last 3 months. And half over the last six months. Right now the state is reporting nearly 4,600 new cases/day, down by about 60% from two weeks ago. It still sounds like a lot, but when omicron first touched down, we had about 123,000 cases/day.

The Governor has delivered his State of the State speech talking soaring gas prices, among other pressing issues, like homelessness, climate change and public education. The speech delivered yesterday at Natural Resources Agency headquarters in Sacramento. He says there will be relief for high gas prices, but not by “embracing polluters” or “drilling even more oil” which he blamed for the more extreme weather in modern times, more extreme drought and more wildfires. In 2020, before the pandemic, Newsom focused on the homeless problem, calling it a disgrace. Last year he set billions aside to shelter the unsheltered. In his speech last year at an empty Dodger Stadium, he paid silent tribute to those lost to COVID.

If you're running for office in Mendocino County for this June's primary, you better tee up your paperwork. Friday is the deadline for the June 7th statewide primary election. Sample ballots are being sent out next month, and May 23rd is the last day to register to vote. There are nine elected officials up for re-election this year, including the Sheriff Matt Kendall and District Attorney David Eyster. Both are running for re-election along with the Assessor-Clerk-Recorder Katrina Bartolomie. They're all so far, running unopposed. But the Superintendent of Schools, another big job up for re-election, does have someone running against incumbent Michelle Hutchins, Nicole Glentzer, the Superintendent of Human Resources for the Ukiah Unified School District. There are some County Supervisors also up for re-election.

Lake County is sending protective gear to help citizens in Ukraine. The Board of Supervisors has given approval after a state request for help. The Sheriff brought the request to the board from the Governor's Office of Emergency Services and from Homeland Security. It was included in the regular meeting as an extra agenda item yesterday. The letter from the Sheriff had been addressed to all Sheriff's in Calif., along with police chiefs and other law enforcement executives asking for help as they continue to monitor the Russian war. It comes after the Ukrainian Consulate asked for help from Calif., in the form of ballistic helmets and vests, and other tactical safety equipment like goggles and gloves.

State Senator Mike McGuire has a competitor from Lake County. Former internet executive Gene Yoon has reportedly filed his candidacy papers to run for the State Senate District 2 seat. McGuire was just named as the Senate Majority Leader, and has held the seat for nearly 8 years. Yoon says there are serious issues with the drought, wildfires and the power grid; crime and homelessness; inflation and failing schools. He said there's no other state district in America that holds so much promise and so many problems. Yoon lives in Lake County. The Senate District also includes Mendocino, Marin, Sonoma, Humboldt, Trinity, and Del Norte.

There's just one gas station in the town of Mendocino, and the prices are currently out of control. Gas prices are sky high everywhere, with Calif., having some of the costliest nationwide. But Schlafer's Auto Body & Repair reportedly boasts the highest in the country. The median price is somewhere around \$4 to \$4.50/gallon due to the war in Ukraine. Schlafer's is charging \$8.45 a gallon for regular. Gas Buddy, an app that helps you find gas at reasonable prices nationwide, says Schlafer's was most likely the most expensive station in America, and that they didn't know of one more expensive. The owner told the SF Chronicle she has to charge that much or she would go out of business.



The Public Lands Telecommunications Act has been reintroduced in the US House. Congressman Jared Huffman says the last couple of years of the pandemic, with many people working from home, remote learning, and telehealth visits, it's revealed a digital divide in the US. He says federal land management agencies can do more to close this gap, if they have more authorities, incentives, and resources, like the ones in his bill. He says in this way land management agencies can help expand broadband access in rural and Tribal communities because it's integral to the country's economy. The bill is supported by the Rural Broadband Association, Rural County Representatives of California, and Competitive Carriers Association, among others.

A man from Morgan Hill has been convicted in Mendocino County after a police chase. Michael Gray was found guilty by the jury for recklessly evading a peace officer, evading a peace officer by traveling in the opposite lane of traffic and misdemeanor possession of methamphetamine. The case in court after a Ukiah police officer followed three motorcycles in October of 2020, Gray being on one of the bikes on S. State St. The cop saw Gray pull a wheelie and the officer went after the trio. Two pulled over, Gray kept going at speeds of up to 70 mph on side streets. He finally crashed and was arrested after he was treated because the bike pinned him under it. He was found with 35 grams of meth. He faces at least six months in jail and will be sentenced next month.

03/10/22 A man accused of burglarizing a home in Fort Bragg has been found not guilty. The Mendocino County DA's office posted on Facebook that the jury came back yesterday and acquitted 54 year old Robert Charles Nutt III for an incident that happened in Fort Bragg in December 2021.

PG&E reporting on a bunch of scams during National Consumer Protection Week. The report last week for the year 2021, where the utility company says they got over 11,000 scam reports from consumers who say someone called them pretending they worked for the company, and what's more, they shelled out as much as \$600,000 in fraudulent payments. The company says there were probably a whole bunch more not reported. And that there are still people getting the calls this year, at a high rate. In January PG&E reported getting 1,055 reports of attempted scams, with customers paying scammers over \$65,000. In Feb., there were 4 in Ukiah and 3 in Lakeport and at least one in Clearlake, Garberville, Hopland and Redwood Valley.

Fort Bragg Police are adding social workers to the department to help when they get calls for someone with mental illness. They say they've had a 60% increase in such calls so they're sending social workers for these service calls who will also act as caseworkers so they can help with any associated court appearances and assist with social services programs that may be available. They will also help with the Emergency Winter Shelter and a planned Respite Center. They're also deciding which staff members within the department can help hire the social workers which will be paid for by a grant.

The owner of a property in Middletown who's been trying to get a cannabis business up and running is appealing a recent Lake County Planning Commission ruling against them. WeGrow owner Zarina Otchkova filed an appeal to the Board of Supervisors last week for the growing, processing and distribution business on nine acres she owns, within a 309 acre property. She was planning for nearly 3 dozen greenhouses, some drying buildings, a shed, a bunch of water tanks and fencing next to Hidden Valley Lake. The Planning Commission unanimously gave it a thumbs down, saying there needed to be an environmental impact report.

Congressman Mike Thompson says he's secured nearly 11 million dollars for infrastructure projects. The money will pour into the Fifth Congressional District as part of the 'For The People' bill. For Lake County, Kelseyville is getting nearly a half million dollars for a sidewalk project for the Safe Routes to School Program. And Lake County as a whole is getting \$320,000 for the Lake County Full Circle Effluent Pipeline Preliminary Design Report Update. That money is going to check the existing wastewater treatment facilities to eventually provide source water for the effluent pipeline. The money will also pay to extend telehealth for 150 days beyond the end of the public health emergency; and many more projects statewide.

The Lake County Cannabis Alliance has presented a plan to the Lake County Board of Supervisors to help relieve them of some of their financial requirements as many across the state complain they could go out of business. The proposal would immediately reduce taxes, change regulations for seed to sale operations, and one-day allow the farmers to allow tourism projects. Their plan is for immediate relief for the industry, switching to a gross receipts tax model like other counties and re-examine zoning restrictions and allowable permits. Down the road, they'd like to see updates for current permits, and ways to upgrade farms so that Lake County can one day be the "Napa of Cannabis".

Even though schools statewide will begin to dump their mask mandates, Sonoma County health and education leaders are going to urge students to continue wearing masks indoors. The mask mandate ends tomorrow. But in Sonoma County's 40 school districts, they can individually decide if they want to enforce stricter face covering rules than the state's. Santa Rosa will keep the mandate in place for now. The Sonoma County Office of Education Superintendent also ordered unvaccinated school staffers and volunteers to wear a mask indoors. They could also end up requiring weekly coronavirus testing.

The Russian River got a new name... temporarily. Somebody took it upon themselves to name the river the Ukrainian River, covering a sign with the country's yellow and blue colors, like an inverted Ukrainian flag, because any upside-down flag is the international symbol of distress. A Salinas man said he did it, then posted it on social media.

Gas prices are way up, if you haven't noticed. It's about \$5.69 a gallon for regular unleaded here in Calif. But the national average is about \$1.30/gallon less. The average in Northern Calif. is about \$5.70 as well, in San Francisco, it shot up to nearly \$6/gallon. It's all over the place in Lake County, from \$5.29 to \$5.99/gallon. And in Mendocino County, from \$5.25 to \$5.75, give or take. Gas prices exploded after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The President also announced earlier this week there would be a ban on Russian oil imports while the invasion continued spiking prices. The Gov. says he's also working on relief for surging gas prices, but has yet to release what that looks like.

As new cases of the once 'novel' coronavirus decline, there's a push for stricter paid sick leave laws from worker advocates. Those calling for change say they would also like to see stronger outreach regarding labor rights for rural farmworkers, as well as people who don't speak English or Spanish. Apparently some workers aren't even aware they could have retroactive pandemic paid sick leave available to them. Labor groups like The United Farm Workers, California Rural Legal Assistance and others in the Central Valley have reported to the state that many low-wage workers did not get COVID-19 supplemental paid sick leave. State law says if there are 26 or more employees, workers are eligible for up to 80 hours of leave related to COVID.

We are in the middle of whale migration season off the coast. The Noyo Center for Marine Science in Fort Bragg is doing its part to help people get to know the world's biggest mammals. On Saturday, as part of Whalefest 2022, the center will host researchers who study whales for a living at the Crow's Nest Interpretative Center. From now until April 2nd, there will be other expert talks and exhibits, including a blue whale skeleton with 73 bones, and a whale-themed scavenger hunt. There is information on the website [noyocenter.org](http://noyocenter.org).

03/11/22

It's "spring forward" into Daylight Saving Time this weekend. Before you go to bed Saturday dig out the instructions and reset that clock on the microwave — and all the other clocks around the house — ahead by an hour. If not, you'll be an hour LATE come Sunday morning. Fire departments say it is also a good time to check your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. It's smart to replace the batteries twice a year, so this weekend can be a reminder to do that. If you hate the twice a year clock-adjustment ritual, lawmakers in California and more than a dozen other states have passed bills favoring year-round saving time. It will literally take an act of congress for a change to happen though.

After a gas station in Mendocino County went viral for having the most expensive gallon of gasoline in the United States, there's one now, that may be one of the cheapest... at least in Calif. The Hidden Oaks Convenience Store is apparently the second cheapest in the state, per GasBuddy, a site that tracks prices for gas, nationwide. The manager of the Mendocino station Schlafer's that had gas at \$8.45/gallon said, it is what it is, and that she'd go out of business otherwise, but the manager at the Hidden Oaks Convenience Store said it's their goal to keep gas affordable as prices keep going up daily. Hidden Oaks was at about \$4.85 for a regular gallon of gas. The highest price, besides in Mendocino, in the state, is in Mono County, where it's at about \$6.50/gallon.

Police officers in Ukiah, who were accused of manhandling and using force on a naked man in a mental health crisis, have been cleared. The department has announced no charges for officers after the arrest last year of 25-year-old Gerardo Magdaleno. They say they used regular police tactics to take him down. Reports say that included pepper spray after they say he wouldn't comply, and a taser on his head, dozens of times. The city reportedly agreed to pay over \$200,000 though in a settlement agreement for Magdaleno. His lawyer says he suffers from schizophrenia and bipolar disorder and was never a threat.

A new report by the Sonoma County DA's office says the Board of Supervisors violated California's open meetings law during the county's redistricting process. The District Attorney's office said there were two times the board along with county officials, did not follow the law. But she says it didn't influence the redistricting outcome. The DA put out a public letter yesterday saying she started an investigation in December after the County Counsel requested it. Plus there were complaints from community members too.

The state agriculture department is warning not to participate in any horse shows for hunter/jumpers for a month due to a recent outbreak of Equine Herpes. The agency put out an open letter saying if the outbreak isn't controlled, there may be serious consequences to the horse industry, infecting thousands of horses due to the extensive mixing of horses at statewide, national, and international horse events. It's not the traditional herpes you may expect, this causes respiratory disease, abortion, neonatal death, and the neurological disease known as EHM. It spreads in aerosolized secretions, by direct contact, and by contact with surfaces containing infected secretions.

One of the Lake County Sheriff's Dept. Detectives has been recognized as the investigator of the year in sex crimes. Lake County Detective Todd Dunia was awarded the Patrick Sullivan Investigator of the Year by the California Sexual Assault Investigator's Association. The award is handed out yearly in the name of Fresno Police Detective Patrick Sullivan. Detective Dunia is the 17th Investigator to receive the prestigious award, recognizing his professionalism, commitment to his community and his outstanding work in the field of Sexual Assault Investigations. He's been with the department 15 years and the Sexual Assault Investigator for ten.

Ahead of what looks to be another dry season in Calif., Pacific Gas and Electric Co. has arborists and foresters out doing foot patrols and say there are an unusually high amount of dead or dying trees in the Cobb Mountain area. Due to the drought, hotter weather, way more bark beetles and sudden oak death, they have more inspectors out. The energy company says they're offering tree felling for property owners and the removal of the wood. But you'll need to give them written approval. The company says they've not seen this many trees like this anywhere else and no other county in the state has been hit harder, than Lake.

Customers who have questions about the Wood Management Program for 2022 tree mortality in Cobb Mountain, please call 1-877-295-4949.

State Senator Mike McGuire has introduced a bill to provide grants to pay for mental health clinicians to work in high need communities. In an appearance with the State Superintendent of Schools earlier this week, McGuire announced there will be 10,000 new counseling positions at schools and youth organizations across the state, especially the ones with a high rate of negative childhood experiences. He says the pandemic has laid bare, more anxiety, depression, loneliness and, even, suicidal thoughts. He also said adverse childhood experiences were going on long before the pandemic.

A woman accused of arson in Lower Lake had a review hearing moved to next month. Kayla Renee Main was at the latest hearing remotely, but the court ordered the matter to be continued until April 5th to see if the defendant had yet been transferred to a state mental hospital for treatment. Since there were behavioral issues at the jail, the defendant was not moved last year after she was to be committed for inpatient treatment. The court also found that she needed to be involuntarily administered drugs so she could even get to a hospital for treatment. Her lawyer also told the court he doubted she was competent to understand the proceedings against her after her arrest for an incident last July. She was reportedly seen near fires and accused of starting them after witnesses put the fires out.

Some Bank of America employees have been donating to a booster shot program to help end hunger. And Redwood Empire Food Bank is reaping the benefits. A \$25,000 dollar donation has been made to the food bank that serves Sonoma, Lake, Mendocino, Humboldt, and Del Norte counties. B of A North Bay donated the money to encourage food bank teammates to get their Covid-19 booster shots. Each team member who got their shot before the end of January got \$100. The \$25,000 raised will provide 100,000 meals to those in need.

03/14/22 A woman has been arrested near Ukiah after breaking into a home, taking a bath, and trying to rip the home off. Apparently, Deputies got to the home a week ago Friday in the 700 block of Watson Road after the homeowner found a bunch of their personal items spread outside, more scattered inside and thought possibly someone had gotten inside the home. Deputies say they found Shannah Griffith about to take off, and in her possession where items taken from the home. The Sheriff's office says she bathed and left a pile of trash behind. She was booked into the Sonoma County Jail on suspicion of burglary; and had been wanted on a warrant for possession of a controlled substance. She was being held on \$20,000 bail.

So far this has been the driest year in Calif. History as we head into the third year of drought and the snowpack is lower than it needs to be. The state's Natural Resources Agency is asking Californians to conserve more water now, so that it helps in the future. They're recommending replacing grass with drought-tolerant plants or switching to water-saving appliances as the drought is worsening and is threatened by climate change. The Governor had asked for a 15% cut in usage last summer. But the state reported only about a 7.5% water savings over last year, which the chair of the State Water Resources Control Board says won't nearly be enough.

A trio of fires have scorched some land in an area near the Mendocino/Sonoma County line between Geysers Road and Highway 101. The fires reportedly burned very near a known homeless encampment and fire officials called them "very suspicious" in nature. Mendo Fever reports they burned in CALFIRE's state responsibility area, so CALFIRE is working to see how they may have started. One near the Russian River blew up pretty fast, which was unusual for this time of year. Hopland Fire was joined by Cloverdale Fire and CALFIRE.

A car chase ended when a suspect crashed into a CHP patrol vehicle after going up to

150 miles/hour. One person who was in the car near Clearlake was arrested after being held at gunpoint first. Another person in the car ran away and has not been caught. Officers say they saw a black lifted truck headed up Highway 29 crossing double yellow lines, weaving in and out of traffic so they blocked an area where the crash happened into a parked CHP SUV. The two inside the truck got out, one was taken to jail.

The Lake County Board of Supervisors considering what to do about drought conditions and living with the COVID-19 endemic in the workplace. The meeting is online and in person at the Lake County Courthouse. The board is considering an amendment to the pandemic work protocols now that things seem to have calmed down. As far as the drought goes, the Comprehensive Drought Workgroup, the Drought Emergency Operations Center, the Lake County Drought Task Force and the Tree Mortality Task Force will report on conditions.

Officials in Lakeport had a public forum on a proposal to annex south Lakeport into Lakeport city limits. The meeting last Thursday at the Lakeport Cinema with both city and county representatives and a public question and answer session on the 136-acre expansion. Lake Co News reports the annexation would mean the City of Lakeport would take control of water and sewage services, offer water hookups for those on well systems and add fire hydrants. And all of that would start in the summer of 23. Law enforcement would be covered by police instead of the Sheriff's office.

A cannabis company is closing in Lake County, which means more than 50 people are out of work. PRO Farms announced they're closing because of current market conditions, blaming over-taxing and over-regulation. The facility took up 60,000 square feet for processing, manufacturing and distribution. They were only open less than a year. They say they have recently expanded into the Central Valley, so they're moving their processing and packaging operations there. The management of the company emailed the Record Bee saying they realize how it impacts locals who were working for them, and the community as a whole.

An informational picket, not a strike, is happening at Sutter Lakeside. Tomorrow nurses will carry signs and information for those interested across 15 facilities as they're preparing for a new contract to improve staffing conditions and pandemic readiness. The Lakeport picket is only for ninety minutes tomorrow starting at 9am. The California Nurses Association/National Nurses United are organizing the picket. Unions for nurses say they've been negotiating with Sutter since June of last year. They are asking management to invest more in nursing staff, provide safe numbers of nurses, pandemic readiness, invest in personal protective equipment stockpiles and follow the state's PPE stockpile law and comply with the state's workplace violence prevention law.

Some state Legislators say they're working on ways to ease gas prices due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Gas prices have been skyrocketing in some places in the state, and slowly creeping up in others. The average price per gallon of gas was \$5.69 at last check, but that was up a dollar a gallon since a month before. The national average was \$4.32. Here in Calif. our prices are higher due to gas taxes for infrastructure and environmental fees. State lawmakers raised the tax about 12 cents in 2017 to pay for roads, bridges, transit projects, and more. The Gov. already had a proposal on the table before the invasion, but economists say it's tiny and won't really put a dent in what we're all dealing with currently. Republicans want to do away with a 51 cent tax temporarily which would amount to a loss to the state between \$4 to \$4.5 billion dollars. Lawmakers are also looking at just sending a rebate to taxpayers, which would be cheaper.

The Lake County Registrar of Voters Office has extended the nomination period to file for candidacy for certain elective county offices for the June Primary. Those interested in filing, who are not incumbent office holders now have until this Wednesday at 5:00 pm because of incumbent officeholders not filing for county offices. You will have to fill out your Nomination Papers and pay a nonrefundable fee. You may also need to file a Nomination Petition with 20 to 40 valid signatures of registered voters who live in your jurisdiction. For more info, you can call the Registrar's Office (707)263-2372 or visit them before Wednesday's 5:00pm deadline.

A man from Covelo's in jail with a hefty bail set after he was arrested for committing crimes while out on bail for other crimes. The Sheriff's Office reports Curtis Bettega's car was seen parked in a parking lot at a motel on North State St. Friday after midnight. They found Bettega was wanted on five felony arrest warrants and two misdemeanor arrest warrants in Mendocino County. Deputies say there was a woman watching them from an upstairs motel room so they went to speak with her and found Bettega in the bathroom and arrested him. Inside the car they found a pump action shotgun, but he's not allowed to have weapons. He was arrested for unlawful possession of a firearm and for committing a crime while out on bail. Plus he had those seven arrest warrants so he was held on \$338,000.00 bail.

There are still protestors trying to get the cutting and logging stopped at the Jackson Demonstration State Forest. Nearly 200 people were at the forest, many Tribal members who had shirts on that said "Pomo Land Back". There were also traditional dancers performing to ancestral songs. The Coyote Valley Band Tribal Chair has been raising concern about the logged areas of the forest to protect cultural sites and artifacts. They've also asked for talks with the Governor's office and have been working with the California Natural Resources Agency to improve access to ancestral lands owned or controlled by the state. They're looking for a co-management agreement with the state for the forest. A logging operation known as the Caspar 500 has been protested and was stopped in June but looks to start again next month. The Tribal Chair says he wants the plan stopped altogether.

A couple of groups who say healthcare is too expensive in the state and sued a massive hospital system got a split result. The cases were over a decade long and may have been a trigger for the Governor looking to hospitals, doctors' offices and insurance companies to keep their costs down. The Office of Health Care Affordability appears in the Governor's nearly \$300 billion dollar budget proposal, following four other states with similar offices. California would be slinging hefty fines at the entities potentially. Monthly health premiums have seriously spiked over the last 15 years. Folks who are insured through their job saw a 249% increase over that time. Some healthcare entities are cheering the idea of the office saying the two lawsuits showed the need.

What's become an all too familiar scene, a fire burned in Covelo after a power line went down. Mendo Fever reports the fire burned yesterday morning in the 22000 block of Refuse Road. The Incident Commander said a power line snapped and flames ignited creating a "life/safety hazard", but it was out in about a half hour of their arrival.

Sheriff Matt Kendall and District Atty. David Eyster are here to stay, as there are no candidates filing to run against either in the June primary election. Sheriff Kendall was appointed Sheriff after Tom Allman retired, so he was never elected to the job. It looks like he's staying through at least 2026 as the filing deadline passed. The DA looks to also be running unopposed. He's been in the job since he was elected in 2010, and ran again, unopposed in both 2014 and 2018. The county's clerk, assessor, recorder and elections administrator is also running unopposed, so she looks to be in for a second term after winning in something of a landslide in 2018.

The Lake County clerk/auditor-controller is not running for office again. Lake Co News reports

Cathy Saderlund confirmed to them she won't run for re-election in the June primary after working for the county for over 4 decades. She started with the county as an account clerk. She was appointed by the Board of Supervisors to her current job in October of 2011. She filled another person's spot and then was on the ballot two times, in 2014 and 18, running unopposed. She told the news site that personal reasons in the last month had her deciding to leave the job. And her assistant has reportedly filed papers before the deadline to run in her place.

Since there's a seat open on the Middletown Unified School Board, and thus, a special election for the seat, a mom and school volunteer says she's running. Charise Reynolds announced she would run. She's one of 10 applicants who interviewed previously for the spot after LaTrease Walker left. Annette Lee was appointed to the seat, but there was a petition circulated pretty soon thereafter to have her removed. There was also another open seat, but that board member, Thad Owens has become the district's new superintendent. And Allison Berlogar was appointed for that seat.

Seven properties to be demolished as the Clearlake City Council considers abatements at their next meeting. At their regular meeting Thursday the council will hear from the Code Enforcement Supervisor about the properties that were deemed health and safety hazards and public nuisances. There have been notices of violation sent to the property owners who haven't done anything to rectify the issues. So the city is set to advertise for bids to demo the properties, the bids should be opened before the meeting. The council is also set to consider a way to finance more road repairs, something they looked at a couple of weeks ago too. The latest "State of the County" report has been released by Lake County.

There are five sections which were presented by various agency leaders. The County Administrative Officer says the county received tens of millions of dollars in grant funding, there's greater strength and stability in the county workforce and a renewed commitment to be sure services the county provides promote the well-being of every Lake County resident. She says there's been "real, meaningful progress in areas where we have struggled for decades." The Sheriff spoke about human trafficking and illegal marijuana and a new headquarters. Many department heads talked about the pandemic and how they had to change how they serviced the community and all and all, the message was that the county remained strong.

The state is reportedly considering offering workers at Juvenile Justice centers significant bonuses to stay in their positions. CalMatters is reporting up to \$50,000 bonuses may be offered to some Division of Juvenile Justice staff members as the state is closing some facilities. The Governor's office is negotiating with at least a half dozen worker unions for the pay increases to keep folks on the job until the June 30th 2023 closures. The bonuses as some staff members started to resign after the Governor announced closure plans which caused staffing shortages. CalMatters reports all direct care employees, which includes youth prison guards, plumbers, teachers and chaplains could get the \$50,000 in additional pay and non-direct care employees could get up to \$25,000.

The communications company, Mediacom has announced they're upgrading download speeds for those using their most popular Xstream tier of internet. More than 900,000 customers will have access for free. Those getting their Access Internet 60 will see a 67% increase in download speeds, the Internet 100 users will get a 100% increase and the Internet 300 uses will get a 33% bump. The company also announced double download speeds for Connect2Compete Plus users, but that's for \$30 more/month. As a reminder if you've ordered the changes, you should probably reboot your modem for the speed changes to take effect, and those with older modems may need to turn them in for a newer model.



Cases of COVID are dropping in Calif. but experts say not to get too comfortable like we're in before times, as there could be new variants in the future, triggering new mask and social distancing protocols. Hospitalizations and positive tests are dropping statewide, taking us down to numbers we were at last summer, pre Delta and Omicron. The test positivity rate was under 2% at last check. It was 22% just two months ago. The state is seeing a seven day average of about 3,000 new cases a day, still a lot higher than the record low in the summer of 2021, when we were at a third of that. Hospitalizations are also way down, just under 3,000 patients for the first time since July of 2021.

As cannabis growers and retailers say they're suffering due to high taxes, a couple hundred protestors have gone to the state Capitol. Assemblyman Jim Wood is looking to get a bill passed for cannabis growers to sell at events. He says the only way small growers can survive is if they are in the money already or can sell at certain venues. Growers say they can't get investors to help, they cannot sell across state lines, giant corporations are moving into the industry, there is more and more market saturation, the federal government still looks down on recreational sales and more challenges. A recent study though, shows the black market and legal markets together bring in about \$100 billion in national sales.

The Mendocino County CEO who is about to leave office has written an open letter to the Board of Supervisors. After sending a letter to the board in January about her earlier than expected retirement, Carmel Angelo said she would leave March 19th, this Saturday. In her goodbye letter she says she enjoyed her time at the top, and as the first female Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and the longest serving CEO in Mendocino County. She said she was grateful for the opportunity to serve with the guidance & support of the Board of Supervisors, both past & present, responding to a number of emergencies. She noted the remnants of the pandemic, fires, legalization of cannabis and the homeless crisis. She cautioned to save the county money

03/16/22 and not spend on non-mandated services.

A man from the Southern Humboldt area has apparently found somebody had died and their body was left at a vacant gas station in Garberville. The man says he was walking by a van with two other people and saw a foot in the door of the van that was left partially opened. He said he first thought it was possibly a blowup doll, but turned a flashlight on and saw it was actually someone's remains. One of the trio called 911 and police came to the scene and awaited the Coroner.

A man from Fort Bragg said to be high on magic mushrooms called 911 to say he was dying. The CHP had to taser the guy, who they say was delirious Saturday night. Jesse Blanton reportedly told dispatch he got a bad batch of psilocybin so a medical emergency response was triggered. The Anderson Valley Fire Chief says the man was found lying in the road, and then jumped up and ran towards them, tearing off a side rear view mirror of a vehicle. Then a fire engine got to the scene, and he ripped another side-view mirror off that vehicle and tore window glass out of its frame. The highway was shut down as the man continued to be uncooperative and threatening. He was finally captured, taken to a hospital, and later booked into jail for resisting or threatening officer and resisting/delaying police officer, plus a couple misdemeanor offenses.

The City of Ukiah is using drones for overhead utility line inspection. The city's utility company reported using the drone technology to inspect distribution lines, transmission lines and substation equipment so they can detect if any repairs are needed. The work will begin next month and continue through October during daylight hours. They will continue the work each year, hoping to avert unplanned power outages. They say it will help them get up close to the lines, without having to climb up to them. They will fly over private properties, but say if they have to make any repairs, they'll call property owners to schedule the work.

The state's recreational salmon fishery is opening. In two Saturdays, the waters from Point Arena south to the U.S./Mexico border. The minimum size limit is 24 inches. The openings north of Point Arena are still to be decided. The state fish and wildlife department reported the two primary stocks are the Sacramento River Fall Chinook and Klamath River Fall Chinook. Not as many fish, and the continued drought and overfishing means there are some restrictions for this year though. The agency says recreational anglers off the Central Coast will have an ample opportunity if the fish show, but in the north, it could be more constrained due to a persistent low abundance of Klamath River Fall Chinook.

Congressman Jared Huffman has announced his district is getting almost \$8 million dollars from the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Emergency Connectivity Fund Program (ECF) from the American Rescue Plan. The money is supposed to go to schools and libraries so they're equipped with internet and to make sure kids can get online if needed in case of virtual learning. It's to aid what we've learned to be the "homework gap" where students lack access to the internet at home and can fall behind in their work. Huffman says there's been a "deep digital divide" that was brought to the forefront nationally during the peak of the pandemic. He says these funds will help bring the tools kids need into schools.

A Tsunami test is coming, so beware that it's not an actual emergency. One week from today, next Wednesday, March 23rd between 11:00 a.m. & 12:00 Noon in Del Norte, Humboldt, and Mendocino counties. There will be interruptions on TV and radio and triggering of NOAA Weather Radios and Outdoor Sirens. The test of the Tsunami Warning System will ensure it works properly during a real tsunami emergency.

Surplus gear from a couple of Lake County law enforcement agencies have been sent to Ukraine after a request to the state of California. The Governor's Office of Emergency Services and Homeland Security had asked all law enforcement agencies, sheriffs, police chiefs and law enforcement executives to donate ballistic helmets and vests, and goggles and gloves after the Ukrainian government requested the help. The Office of Emergency Services and the California National Guard are helping to collect the items. The Lake County Sheriff's Office reports sending 20 pairs of ballistic helmets and vests. The Lakeport Police Chief told the city council last night, they too had donated some equipment. But not in Clearlake. So far the state reports they are sending beds, wound and IV kits, a defibrillator, wheelchairs and other necessary supplies; 100 oxygen concentrators; and personal protective equipment to supply refugee camps.

State money for housing projects is coming for the Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians. The Governor made the announcement yesterday of \$181 million dollars for over a dozen Homekey projects across the state. The state says that will mean 605 housing units for people experiencing homelessness, or at risk of becoming homeless. Governor Newsom said yesterday since the beginning of the pandemic, thousands of individuals have been housed and almost every week, they've been approving more of these Homekey projects. The Scotts Valley Band of Pomo Indians will get almost \$2 million dollars for housing projects in Lakeport where they will be able to secure, then rehab the sites.

In Willits, students don't need to wear masks to protect against COVID19 anymore. Last week, the Willits Unified School District (WUSD) Board of Directors met in person and online where they voted unanimously for an updated Covid Safety Plan. Changes include, no more masks, but that they're "strongly recommended" for staff and students, same for buses. Those at the meeting in person and on Zoom were in favor of doing away with the facial coverings. They did say though that if there is a rise in cases over a ten-day period, they will require masks again until the case rate stabilizes over five days. Some parents and others did say they were concerned kids or adults who wanted to continue to wear masks would be bullied, but they were assured they were prepared to deal with that possibility.

Another day, another dollar, or so... Gas prices still soaring. Yesterday, another record broken, the highest average gas price was at \$5.75 a gallon in CA, which is apparently, the most anywhere in the country. AAA reports gas is about 30 cents more this week, than last. The highest national average was \$4.33 a gallon. San Francisco's gas was creeping up to \$6/gallon, at \$5.87 Monday and Tuesday. Most prices across the Bay Area were stable and not soaring, but were way higher than last month. AAA is reported the price of a barrel of crude is down though, from about \$123/barrel just after the invasion of Ukraine, to under \$110 this past Monday. Gasbuddy's head of petroleum analysis says the price of a barrel dropped under \$98 actually, and that could mean lower overall average gas prices in coming weeks.

The first Redwood Trail Agency meetup has taken place. State Sen. Mike McGuire reports the North Coast Railroad Agency has also officially stopped operating, which means the official start of the Great Redwood Trail Agency. McGuire put out a statement that the agency now owns the North Coast's crumbling rail line, which also spurs the buildup instead of the longest Rail Trail in America. It will go from the San Francisco Bay to Humboldt Bay. The new agency became a reality from a bill McGuire authored. They will oversee the Trail Master Plan later this fall and build the Great Redwood Trail on top of the current rail bed. Various agencies will build certain sections of the trail.

Russian River Brewing Co. is raising money for Ukraine by brewing a limited beer. The brewing company in Windsor is donating proceeds of the sales to help the citizens of the country recently invaded and bombed by Russia. The company says they'll brew a strong golden ale based from a recipe from the Pravda Brewery in Lviv, Ukraine. Russian River will sell it for \$10/can and release it with their Pliny the Younger March 25th, which typically brings thousands of beer fans who wait in hours-long lines over two weeks. That one is a triple India pale ale and is thought to be one of the finest beers in the world.

03/17/22

Intro: California did not fare as well as expected on the Environmental Scorecard, a report card put out every year since 1973 by the nonprofit California Environmental Voters. The low score apparently due to inaction on the many climate bills that stalled in the state Senate, even though Democrats have a supermajority. Mary Creasman with California Environmental Voters says many Democratic lawmakers talk a good game but then vote to delay climate action.

:15 “We actually have the solution and the technology, and all of those things are actually job creators too, and will advance our economy. What we don’t have is the political will to do it at the rate and scale that science tells us we have to.”

Tag: Opponents of climate-action bills often cite the costs to business. The scorecard also says Governor Gavin Newsom made pro-climate decisions 82 percent of the time. Overall, state Democrats earned a score of 80 percent, while Republicans got a score of 15 percent.

Second Cut: Assemblyman Steve Bennett says it’s been tough to get colleagues to devote sufficient resources to decarbonize buildings and transportation, switch to renewables or modernize our grid and energy storage.

(video) “Politicians don’t get popular by asking people to make sacrifices today to solve a problem that’s going to come in 15 or 20 years down the road, And that’s why we’ve been so slow in taking action on climate change.”

Third Cut: Former Assemblyman David Chiu, now City Attorney for San Francisco, says there is hope – if Californians work together.

:14 “There is enough wind off the coast of California to power the entire grid with clean power while creating great jobs for tens of thousands of workers. But there is so much work we need to continue to do to advance clean-energy solutions.”

**Tag: You can look up your representative’s score and read the entire report at [envirovoters.org/scorecard](http://envirovoters.org/scorecard).**

In one of her final acts on the job, Mendocino County Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Carmel Angelo appointed Julia Krog as Director of the Department of Planning and Building Services. Krog is a county native, hailing from Elk on the coast. She’s been with the county for 9 years, starting as a planner with the Department of Planning and Building Services. Over the years, she’s served in several different positions, but has been the Assistant Director for the last year.

A teenager in Willits has been arrested after threats were made to Willits High. Police say they got a call from a concerned citizen who also provided them with a screenshot off of a social media site, posted by a student Tuesday. Police say the post was serious in nature and deemed a credible threat. The principal was told about the incident and called the kids home. Police further investigated and found evidence supporting what the threat apparently was. The child was arrested and taken to Juvenile Detention for making criminal threats. Police say there are no more threats to the public now, nor any other suspects.

A young man from the Fort Bragg area has been found guilty of vandalism. Mendo Fever reports the 21-year-old, identified as Fabian Sanchez is a member of the Sureno Street Gang. Police say he caused over \$1,000 damage to the red colored “Buddy Bench” at the playground at Redwood Elementary School. Apparently the Sureno Gang identifies with the color blue and have damaged other items with red in the past. Mendo Fever reports there were at least two others with Sanchez that night, but they have not been identified. Sanchez’s case has been referred to the Adult Probation Department for a sentencing recommendation. He’s due back in court at the end of next month.

State Senator Mike McGuire has reportedly teamed up with the City of Clearlake, Lake County Supervisors Sabatier and Simon and local water districts to bring in state money to pay for an intertie between some water districts near the City of Clearlake. An intertie is a passage between utilities. Lake Co News reports the Senate Majority Leader and city, and county began working together after the Cache Fire last summer to help upgrade infrastructure. The intertie would allow the sharing of water in an emergency between three water districts, the Lower Lake County Waterworks District, the Highlands Mutual Water Company, and the Konocti County Water District. McGuire says the county’s had some of the worst wildfires in the state, so upgrading and building resiliency within local water systems “is an absolute must”.

The Building Bridges Community Center in Ukiah transformed into an all-day shelter too. The facility's manager told the Ukiah Planning Commission they've seen better behaviors, allowing them to transition to 24/7. The shelter managed by Redwood Community Services was just overnights and closed during the day and used as a resource center. Management says they were finding some of their regulars were congregating in one spot or another and it led to a lot more conflicts, but when they transitioned to all day access, they saw a significant drop in conflicts, assaults and violence. They've been open for a few years with funding to stay open year-round, not just in the winter. Because of that, they have to report to the city with an update every six months as part of their use permit.

At a hearing of the Lake Local Agency Formation Commission, they discussed the city of Lakeport's plans to annex the South Main Street corridor, but made no decision. Lake Co News reports the decision on the matter was tabled because they want to formally protest it and need to figure out what the protocol is. The commission mulled the matter at their meeting for a couple of hours and plan to consider it again March 30th, in two weeks from yesterday. The news site reports they're concerned with whether properties along the edge of the annexation area can be removed, as the property owners are protesting the issue. Then the annexation may be able to move forward after all.

The CHP is reminding to get yourself a designated driver for St. Patrick's Day if you're planning on green beer or the like. The patrol says to avoid taking chances and make the right decision to get a sober ride home if you plan to imbibe. There were three deaths on this holiday last year and another 76 were injured in the state due to DUI crashes. The patrol also says, not only will you be impacted by a loss or injury, but the costs add up if you get a DUI, with attorney fees, fines, court costs, lost time at work, higher insurance rates, and car repairs can reach \$15,000 or more in California.

It went off as planned... at 15 Sutter Health facilities in Northern Calif., Registered Nurses held an informational picket. There were about 30 in Lakeport Tuesday with signs. The nurses protesting staffing numbers, work-place violence, and pandemic readiness. They've been negotiating a new contract since last summer. Their union, the California Nurses Association/National Nurses United (CNA/ NNU) released a statement regarding their members being front line workers before and all during the pandemic. The Record Bee reports some nurses said the hospital system has made more money but refused to invest in resources they need to provide safe and effective care to patients and the community. Nurses told corporate officials they would be having the informational picket.

If you're looking for a new job in Ukiah, you may be in luck. The county's having an Education Job Fair March 26th. The fair put on at the Mendocino County Office of Education (MCOE) Cedar Building at 9am with employers from local school districts from both Mendocino and Lake Counties. Together they have over 50 open positions. Those looking for work are invited to meet and possibly interview with the prospective employers and should bring multiple copies of their resume, any credentials or licenses, letters of recommendation, and copies of academic transcripts. Representatives from Mendocino College and National University will also be on hand to talk to applicants about requirements for teaching credentials and opportunities to acquire additional education and job skills.

The Mendocino County Sheriff's Office following in their neighbor, Lake County's, footsteps, donating gear to the battle in Ukraine. Sheriff Matt Kendall says they're working with the Calif. Office of Emergency Services and the National Guard to get them 20 sets of surplus ballistic vests and helmets. Fire Chiefs in the county are also reportedly gathering trauma response supplies to send over too, that could include items like ice packs and bandages. The Sheriff posted on Facebook that the donated items are being picked up by the state and will get to residents of Ukraine within two weeks. Kendall says the vests are older and need replacing, and he says at least they can save lives. He also says he doesn't believe in what the Russian president is doing. We reported yesterday that Lake County was also sending items after the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the move last week.

PG&E is being held accountable for causing wildfires by State Senator Mike McGuire. The Senate Majority Leader is calling for the utility to finally underground their transmission and distribution lines after the company was blamed for deaths, charged with 100 felonies and claimed bankruptcy after several fires a few years ago. McGuire has introduced a bill to ensure the utility company at least undergrounds their equipment in the most fire prone areas, 10,000 miles or so. The bill also looks to save ratepayers on their utility bills and watch over the utility to make sure they get the work done. So far only 100 miles has been done. McGuire says every time there's a fire PG&E apologizes, pays a fine, says they've hardening the lines and moves on. He says he doesn't trust their "lip service".

The body of a man who was found dead in a van in Garberville has been identified. Three people who happened upon the van, with its door partially open, spotting the body, called for help. The Humboldt County Sheriff's Department responded to a vacant gas station. They say it was 51-year-old Johnny Ko of Los Angeles, and that there were no obvious signs of foul play. There will also be an autopsy performed today.

The County Administrative Officer in Lake County is retiring. Carol Huchingson released a letter to the public yesterday, noting her more than 3 decades in public service, the last 29 in Lake County. She credits hundreds of incredible people who have dedicated their lives to serving the community. She wrote about those facing food and housing insecurity, and other deep, personal challenges. She also said there was no greater honor than being entrusted by the Board of Supervisors and touted the work they did together, whether rebuilding after wildfires or the COVID19 pandemic. Her last day in office is the end of next month.

It's finally moving forward... it looks like a massive reservoir, long-planned in Northern Calif is finally coming to fruition, with the help of the federal government. The fed looks poised to loan almost \$2.2 billion dollars to the state, which is about half the cost for design, planning and construction. The plan is to build in the tiny town of Sites, in the mountains in rural Colusa County, a plan in the making for well over a half century. The EPA announced the loan yesterday, but final approval of the loan could take another two years.

The Governor has announced the appointment of several judges across the state, including a former Mendocino County Public Defender. 48-year-old Kristi Peariso, worked here for a short time as a Public Defender, from 1998 to 2000. She was named among 17 Californians to take the bench. She was appointed to serve on the Ventura County Superior Court. Since leaving Mendo, she's been a law professor at the Southern California Institute of Law and a defense attorney in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties.

The Mendocino County Public Health Officer looked like he was having a good time. A picture posted of Dr. Andy Coren and the hosts of a podcast called "Like it or Not". The pair, Carter Lane and Drew Nicoll talked COVID, masks, mandates and more with Coren. The two hosts from Ukiah host their podcast weekly checking in with locals and chatting about the county. Other guests have included the Sheriff, local musicians and financiers.

There's a new Executive Director at the Alex Rorabaugh Recreation Center (ARRC). They've announced Carter Grissom has been appointed to the position where he'll help the board of directors continue their mission. The Center helps kids after school who participate in the Boys & Girls Club. Plus hundreds use the Center for classes, sports camps and there are youth sports leagues at the facility year round.

Tomorrow is the County CEO's last day. After 12 years as the Chief Executive Officer Carmel Angelo is saying her goodbyes. At her last Board of Supervisors meeting as CEO, she received a proclamation, which the Board Chair, Fifth District Supervisor Ted Williams read aloud. They touted her leadership during the pandemic, the legalization of cannabis and catastrophic wildfires. At the same time, she was called out in a Grand Jury Report which found failures at the top and in the Board of Supervisors. The Daily Journal reports the Jury's report said the CEO had too much power because of gaps in leadership from the Board.

Just like in Before Times, the City of Ukiah could allow people to come back in person to City Council meetings. The City Manager Sage Sangiacomo announced yesterday as the mask mandates are rescinded and case numbers come down with other restrictions, staff is working with the mayor on ways to do hybrid meetings. He says they could begin that around the first week of April. The Mayor apparently asked staff members how comfortable they were with that. And the city manager answered saying he thought they were all ready for the hybrid idea. The council members agreed that the public was also ready to get back to in person meetings, but there may be some still uncomfortable with the idea, so the hybrid model was a way to meet in the middle.

An idea circulating in the state Legislature could ease the pain at the pump. Some Democratic Assembly members have drafted a proposal to send a \$400 dollar rebate to taxpayers to take the edge off the soaring price of gas, along with an increase in the cost of living during the pandemic. They estimate the \$400 rebate would amount to almost 70 gallons of gas at the current price, which at last look was edging up to \$6/gallon in many places statewide. Gov. Gavin Newsom also mentioned he would have a proposal for relief, but he has yet to release any details of that. Republicans meanwhile are asking for a temporary reprieve of a 51 cent gas tax, but that failed in the Legislature.

A formal move by the City of Fort Bragg against the Skunk Train. At this week's City Council meeting, they approved a letter to send to the Coastal Commission about the Mendocino Railways loan application. The city says it looks like the skunk train is acting like a public utility, not a tourist train, something they disagree with. The city says Mendocino Railways is trying to claim exemption of regulations and bypass community planning. The application says the money for the Skunk Train would be to repair railroad ties, rebuild the track, and restore the tunnel, part of a development plan to expand the train. But the city's letter says they've not been contacted about the plans or started a product review process.

Have you ever watched the show, "Undercover Boss"? A couple of folks in Fort Bragg made an appearance on it last month. The manager of the local Round Table Pizza, Laudalina Parks, and her employee, Trish Fernandez, were on an episode February 25th. The two following the president and CEO of Round Table, Paul Damico, who appeared in disguise, as the bosses do, on a cross-country trip to pop into locations without managers knowing. There are 420 locations on the West Coast. The Fort Bragg location is reported to be in the top 25% of profitable Round Table restaurants.



A major event in Ukiah to raise awareness about sexual exploitation and human trafficking. iEmpathize.org along with several local community sponsors have put together a multimedia exhibit for the week of March 28th at the Ukiah Valley Conference Center. It will be an immersive experience in film, photography, and artifacts that show the stories of resilient survivors of human trafficking worldwide. The president of iEmpathize is traveling with the exhibit and will be at the Conference Center leading guided tours and showing adults how they can empower youth, moving people from apathy or sympathy to empathy. This is an issue in Northern CA and Mendocino County, so the local sponsors include this radio station, CASA of Mendocino & Lake Counties; the Mendocino County Department of Social Services; Project Sanctuary; Redwood Community Services; South Ukiah Rotary; and Ukiah Unified School District

A couple in Willits held a get together to discuss the ongoing war in Ukraine, and their relation to the war torn county with others in their local community. Aimee and Brady Nord reportedly raised \$2,200 from presentations from their time in the Peace Corps in Ukraine. They spent two years there teaching English to locals in a small village. They have updated their presentation to include current events for the Willits Rotary Club and at

03/21/22 Northspur Brewery.

Even less water is going to those who are served by the State Water Project. The next allocation will be just 5 percent of what they requested, two thirds less than what was expected in December. It's still very dry even though we have had some wet weather. It's nowhere near what is needed. So on Friday, the Department of Water Resources announced the drop in distribution because of a "historically dry January and February", and no significant storms forecasted in the days ahead. Not all who get allocations will be totally cut back, those with senior water rights have agreements in place to protect how much water can be cut. And all allocations could be cut again in May or June after the last snow survey of the season. That comes April 1st.

A man from Santa Rosa has been arrested in Ukiah after a traffic stop led to a DUI. Deputies pulled Elezar Cavero-Martinez over and say he reeked like booze. He also gave Deputies his brother's name and birthday. Deputies further say there were booze bottles about the car, so they did a field sobriety test on the guy, finding he was indeed impaired. Cavero-Martinez was booked into Mendocino County Jail, found that he gave them a fake name as he had a suspended license for another DUI and was on pre-trial release for the same. He also had a couple warrants out for his arrest. He was being held on \$15,000.00 bail for various crimes.

A woman from Redwood Valley has been arrested after the car she was in was pulled over for an expired registration. Nichole Sotillekonevitch was the passenger, and the driver was found to be on Post Release Community Supervision (PRCS). So Deputies searched the car and found a loaded shotgun, a short barreled assault rifle and a loaded high capacity magazine. Also, the assault rifle did not have a serial number. Deputies say the arms belonged to Sotillekonevitch. She was then arrested for several felonies, including Possession of Short Barreled Rifle, Possessing an Undetectable Firearm and Possessing a Large Capacity Magazine. She's held on \$15,000.00 bail.

After a student from Willits High School was arrested for alleged threats towards the school, they're not being charged after all. The child was booked in Mendocino County Juvenile Hall for Criminal Threats last week. But police say the Probation Department and District Attorney's Office decided the case didn't warrant further action. The DA's office said they didn't think they had enough evidence to proceed with a filing. The police department says that doesn't negate the fact that they had enough evidence against the juvenile to begin with.

A man in Willits has been taken to jail for Assault with a Deadly Weapon and Criminal Threats. Police say they got a call to a home Saturday night for an assault and found 35 year old Robert Spicer had confronted family members with a knife, threatening their lives. The family members left the home, fearing for their lives and called police. The man also locked them out when they left, but apparently his brother tried to get inside the home and was nearly stabbed. He grabbed a metal rod and fended Spicer off. Spicer had apparently had several run ins with police lately and has been delusional. Family members were working with mental health professionals for him and were trying to get him evicted. They worked with police this last time to get him to come out of the home willingly and a police dog helped. He was taken to the hospital for treatment, then arrested for several crimes including Assault with a Deadly Weapon, Resisting Arrest with Violence and Criminal Threats.

A woman from Novato accused of driving head on into a van in Clearlake with her pickup truck has been given probation. 22 year old Keilah Marie Coyle was in her Ford F-150 truck and crossed over Highway 29's solid double yellow lines, hitting the van. The probation department granted the probation, finding her guilty of Gross Vehicular Manslaughter with vessel while intoxicated and DUI with Alcohol while causing injury, but some of the more serious charges against her were dropped. The probation includes terms and conditions including electronic and alcohol monitoring, more treatment/ counseling programs, community service hours and she has to be under the watchful eye of a probation officer. She cannot violate any laws or leave the state without permission. 53 year old Cassandra Rolich and 47 year old Miguel Dominguez were killed in the crash.

Some California community clinics say they're still waiting to get paid back for millions of COVID vaccinations. The clinics apparently in some of the poorest and neediest areas, and in areas where the majority of the residents are people of color. CalMatters reports the state has not released info on how to submit claims, so as of right now the clinics are out the money. There's no actual dollar amount overall, but many of the clinics say they're owed several million dollars, which is frustrating, as the state claimed it was committed to vaccine equity, but they haven't been paid back. Some of the clinics, the news site reports may have to close their vaccination clinics, if they don't get the money they've spent. One state Senator from Van Nuys has drafted a bill though, to invest \$400 million in community health centers for wages, workforce training and improved care.

Since the Lake County Administrative Officer announced her retirement, the Board of Supervisors will consider recruitment at their next meeting. Tomorrow the board will meet online and discuss how they intend to find a replacement for Carol Huchingson who announced last week she would leave office at the end of April after six years in the position.

Lake County District 2 Supervisor Bruno Sabatier says he'll run for another term this June. The Lake County Registrar of Voters has reportedly received the required documentation for Sabatier to run, and there are no opponents, so he's obviously staying in office another five years now. The primary is June 7th, with the General Election in November. Sabatier has also served on the Clearlake City Council. His first time on the board started in 2019. Some of the issues he's worked on include Cannabis, the pandemic, the drought and crime.

Free lunches in Calif. that went to children in kindergarten through 12th grade from the USDA, could be ending. The federal government's National School Lunch Program was expanded in March of 2020 due to the pandemic. Most kids under 18 years old, no matter if they were attached to a certain school or not, were served. Waivers were granted so there was more program flexibility, and the waivers have been renewed many times. Before the pandemic, almost 30 million lunches were served daily through the National School Lunch Program. But the last waiver ends June 30th. Advocates are trying to get Congress to continue again, at even higher levels, but the funds were reportedly not included in the last spending bill House and Senate lawmakers passed this month.

Large events have been on and off over the last two years. They're on now with proof of vaccination or a negative COVID test. But the state has recently decided to ditch that requirement. Calif. will change to a strong recommendation for a negative test or vaccination for large indoor events on April 1st. That's for events with over 1,000 people, sometimes referred to as "indoor mega events." Organizers will be encouraged to screen attendees based on the risk of transmission of the virus. This is the new guidance the California Department of Public Health announced last Friday. It's the latest health protocol to be tossed. The universal mask mandate for indoor places was rescinded a month ago, and last week students were allowed to take their masks off, but school districts are allowed to keep it in place, if they want.

The Governor has proposed giving \$100 million dollars to certain Native American tribes so they can buy and maintain their ancestral lands. The Press Democrat reports the proposal is part of Newsom's promise to give a third of the land in Calif. and coastal waters to tribes by 2030. He says tribal leaders should also get to decide what land they preserve. Last week Newsom announced part of his budget would be earmarked for tribes, but the state Legislature has to also greenlight the idea. It wouldn't be a grant, but instead the state's Natural Resources Secretary says they'll come up with a structure or process for tribes to decide where the money goes. It's all part of the continued 'Land Back' movement to return Native American homelands to the descendants of the people who previously lived on and owned the land.

A man from Washington State has been arrested in Willits after he was found asleep in a vehicle. The Mendocino County Sheriff's Dept. reports a Deputy spotted Jack Waldrop last Tuesday along the side of a road, partially blocking a lane. He was asked for his driver's license and said no, then took off. The Deputy took chase for about 10-12 more miles until Waldrop stopped again. He got out of the vehicle and was immediately arrested for evading. Then, after a warrants check, it was found he had an outstanding nationwide extradition felony arrest warrant from the State of Washington for first degree kidnapping. They say he also seemed drunk, so he was charged with DUI. He's booked into Mendocino County Jail and held on \$535,000.00 bail.

The new omicron variant of coronavirus is expected to surge in Calif. as cases spike across the globe. The strain right now, known as BA.2, has not spawned severe illness or hospitalizations, but it's early still. The World Health Organization says there's been a week-over-week increase in global coronavirus cases since the end of January. The places really seeing the spike are Africa, Asia and Europe. Health officials say they're prepared for cases in the states, and here in Calif., this spring. Preliminary info suggests the new strain is 30% to 60% more contagious than the original omicron, which exploded across the state this winter. So far BA.2 was mostly seen in the Northeast, with 40% of coronavirus cases; and on the West Coast, it was at about 25% of cases.

03/22/22

There's been more overdoses in Round Valley than last year. Mendocino reports over the last two weeks there were five overdoses of victims under 26 years old, and since the start of the year 17 OD's where Narcan had to be used. But no deaths. The Mendocino County Sheriff told the news site the rise in overdoses could be attributed to fentanyl which is a low cost ingredient drug dealers are using to cut their materials with. The Sheriff says the most vulnerable are habitual opioid users and since drug use and possession have been decriminalized, there haven't been any new policies or institutions to help addicts. Round Valley Indian Health Center says they're trying to help residents and educate them about the risk of taking the drugs.

A man who Deputies say was acting in an aggressive manner has been arrested. The man reportedly driving under the influence with two minors, 10 and 13 years old, in the car with him. Kym Kemp reports the man was acting out against the kids while driving. Someone passing by called dispatch to report hearing the man saying he was going to kill the children's mother. He was driving on SR 1 at the time last night. Cops put out a Be on the Lookout report for him before 7pm. The CHP picked the guy up eventually after chasing him for a minute.

After a single car crash reported on State Route 1, a Ukiah CHP officer reported to the scene. They found a motorcycle down. After apparently driving too fast around a curve, the crash happened into a metal guardrail, killing the driver. Their name has not been released. The CHP has not released many more details about the incident.

A management group who were in charge of mental healthcare services for Mendocino County is being audited. The Board of Supervisors have reportedly subpoenaed people and paperwork connected to the Ortnier Management Group who used to provide services to the county from 2013 to 2016. The county's Acting CEO Darcie Antle says next Monday those subpoenaed will appear on Zoom for a special meeting. The company was also the subject of a Grand Jury report which said the county improperly awarded the contract to the group, and there had been a conflict of interest, but nothing illegal happened. The jury however recommended the county update its ethics policies because the company was working as a consultant for the county, and the county's mental health director had a business relationship with the company, giving them inside info.

Four Willits City Council members are up for re-election. And the top four vote getters will win the seats. Councilwoman Marcia Rafanan wasn't elected to her seat, she was appointed for two years. And the three others are finishing their four years on the job, they're Jessica Morsell-Haye, Lindy Peters and Tess Albin-Smith. But so far, they haven't said if they're running officially, their deadline is August 12th. There could also be newbie council members in Ukiah, Willits and Point Arena. Two councilmembers in Pt. Arena left the job last year, one seat was appointed a new member, and the other seat was filled in an unopposed special election, and a third is also up for re-election too. Two councilmembers in Willits are up for re-election and two in Ukiah as well.

An online townhall is planned with the Mendocino County District 3 supervisor ahead of the official wildfire season. Supervisor John Haschak is moderating a panel for the Willits Economic Localization forum. As locals get ready for the hotter months of the year, the panel will weigh in on what folks can do to prepare for an emergency and evacuate, if needed. The meeting is next Thursday, March 31st at 6:30 p.m. on Zoom. The info:

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81586789184?>

What are public agencies doing to prepare?

How can YOU be prepared?

Moderated by Supervisor John Haschak

Intro: A hearing is set for today in Sacramento – for a bill that would make Medi-Cal accessible to more people. Low-income older adults and people with disabilities who make just over the Medi-Cal limit have to pay 60 percent of their monthly income as a share of cost, minus a set amount for living expenses. That so-called “maintenance level” is set at just 600 dollars a month. Attorney Tiffany Huyenh-Cho with the nonprofit Justice in Aging says Assembly Bill 19-hundred raises the maintenance level to 138% of the federal poverty level, which works out to about 14-hundred dollars a month.

:10 “It would free up income to pay for food, rent and other expenses because the maintenance need level won't be set at such a low number, at \$600 a month for a single person.”

Tag: So far there is no registered opposition to the bill. The high cost of living in the Golden State makes it nearly impossible to cover basic necessities on 600 dollars a month. 91-thousand Californians participate in the share-of-cost program, excluding people in long-term care. 57-thousand are older adults and persons with disabilities. Today's hearing before the Assembly Committee on Health will be live-streamed starting at 1:30 p.m.

Second Cut: Huyenh-Cho says at the current maintenance level, many people can't afford to use the share-of-cost program.

:17 “It forces people to forgo medical care because that share of cost is so high, or folks are forced to move into a skilled nursing facility because they can't afford the wraparound services that Medi-Cal may cover that allow a person to live in their home.”

Tag: Advocates say health equity is a big concern because a disproportionate percentage of patients on the share-of-cost program are people of color on fixed incomes.

Intro: A coalition of 70 health and community groups called Care4All California released its 2022 package of 16 bills and budget requests on Monday, aiming to make health care more affordable and accessible. The most well-known is Assembly Bill 4, which would extend Medi-Cal to all income-eligible adults regardless of immigration status. Anthony Wright with HealthAccess California says, taken together, the package would give health care to an additional 700-thousand people and benefit millions more.

:10 “The package would represent the biggest expansion of coverage since the Affordable Care Act and would be the most far-reaching in terms of providing cost relief to millions of Californians. “

Tag: Senate Bill 944 and AB 1878 would eliminate deductibles on Silver plans on the Covered California exchange. A-B 1995 would eliminate premiums on Medi-Cal. And S-B 644 would require the state to reach out to people who apply for unemployment assistance, to see if they need help finding health-care coverage.

Second Cut: State Senator Scott Wiener is sponsoring S-B 858, which would raise the fines for insurance companies that unlawfully deny or delay medically necessary services.

:08 “And so we’re increasing that \$2,500-per-violation fine to \$25,000 so that it actually means something.”

Third Cut: State Assemblymember Blanca Rubio is sponsoring AB 2402, which would extend continuous coverage to children on Medi-Cal for the first five years of life.

:06 “Right now, we have about 90,000 children ages 0 to 5 in Medi-Cal that have had a gap in coverage.”

Tag: Other bills in the package include SB 923, which requires health plans to list doctors that provide gender-affirming care, and AB 1130, which would create an office of health-care affordability.

Electric buses are gracing Mendocino County, compliments of the Mendocino Transit Authority. The MTA announced they’ve started to move over to all electricity-powered public bus service in Willits. They’ve now got two 18-passenger “cutaway” buses that travel on Route 1 hourly. That route connects downtown Willits with local shopping and some healthcare providers, the Harrah Senior Center, Howard Hospital and Sherwood Rancheria. They travel between the hours of about 7 a.m. and finish before 5:30 p.m.. They have to charge overnight at the bus yard, then start all over again. There will be a total of six all electric buses that will travel between Willits, Fort Bragg and Ukiah in coming years, then they will add another three after that. The two they have cost more than a half million dollars, which was almost entirely covered by the Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust for California.

A man from Upper Lake found guilty of murdering his partner, and the mother of his children, back in court. Willy Tujays Timmons was convicted last year in the bludgeoning death of Vanessa Niko. He was in quarantine in the jail and had his sentencing continued. The case goes back to 2017 when Niko was hit with a rock and died. Timmons has been charged with murder, inflicting corporal injury with a prior conviction within seven years, causing permanent disability, and torture, plus the previous conviction of battery before the death, which would be taken into consideration. He wanted to fire his lawyer too, and now awaits sentencing while in Jail.

An RV in Clearlake Oaks and a garage burned and a man at the scene had minor injuries. The fire Monday morning had Northshore Fire, Lake County Fire and Cal Fire out, but it was out pretty much after they arrived. The RV and an upstairs apartment caught fire along with the garage. Two people were there at the time, one of them ended up in the hospital to be treated for smoke inhalation and was later released. So far investigators say, they're not sure how it started.

Since fire season has begun in earnest in California, CAL FIRE says they're recognizing their 500th Firewise USA site. The recognition by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) shows a certain community is working to reduce wildfire risk to homes in that area. Hollister Ranch in Santa Barbara County is the newest, and 500th Firewise USA® Community in the state. The area has 133 parcels. Coincidentally, only four days after the area was recognized, the Hollister Fire broke out in the Hollister Ranch community. And a couple of homes in its path were saved as the homeowners recently cleared brush away, to make way for defensible space.

03/23/22 A new Supreme Court justice has been confirmed in Calif. A historic moment in the state as the appeals court judge from San Diego, who is the daughter of Mexican immigrants was confirmed.

Justice Patricia Guerrero was approved unanimously. She will be the first Latina to serve on the high court. Her appointment after Associate Justice Mariano-Florentino Cuéllar resigned last year. Guerrero is a native of the Imperial Valley and has been a prosecutor, law firm partner, Superior Court judge and most recently served on the 4th District Court of Appeal. She will be sworn in by the Governor, then take her seat. About her historic appointment, Guerrero said, "this is a story of the American Dream" and believing that with hard work, perseverance and opportunities, anything is possible.

State Senator and Senate Majority Leader Mike McGuire has pushed legislation through to divest all state money from Russia and any Russian-state entities due to the attack on Ukraine. It passed the first Senate Committee it hit yesterday with bipartisan support. It means that any public pensions in California – including the two largest in the country, STRS and PERS, divest from Russian and Belarusian assets and companies. The bill was unanimously passed in the Senate Labor, Public Employment and Retirement Committee. McGuire says the state stands with Ukraine and that "we'll do everything in our power to usher in debilitating economic consequences on Russia for this horrific and bloody war."

Ukiah police have responded to an apartment building after a medical aid call turned into a suspicious death call. Police say they got a call yesterday around 1:30 in the afternoon for a medical call and that paramedics thought it seemed to be suspicious in nature. They have not released any names, of the victim or possible suspects. Paramedics reportedly performed CPR to no avail. The incident in the 200 block of East Gobbi Street had the area cordoned off for a time.

State Senator Bill Dodd has announced he's advanced his bill to help the traffic snarl-ups on Highway 37 be protected by potential flooding. The area has reportedly been predicted to eventually end up in water, so Dodd's bill would create a toll to pay for infrastructure improvements to this section of highway. Money from the federal infrastructure bill recently passed could also go to fix the area. Dodd says the area is predicted to be under water within 20 years. And that mixed with congestion and seasonal flooding, would make it worse. The area is a 21 mile stretch of Hwy 37 from Interstate 80 to Highway 101. The bill passed with bipartisan support.

A fire burned in Hopland after a piece of equipment sparked grass. CAL FIRE and Hopland Fire on the scene. The Chief of Hopland Fire told Mendo Fever it burned very well and quickly grew to two acres. There was a chopper overhead so they could watch the spread. Fire officials say it burned like it was July. And the county's vegetation is probably a month or two ahead of schedule as far as fire seasons go. And the news site also reported the National Weather Service said the "extreme drought" has created a higher risk of fast-spreading wildfires.

There may soon be only 5 Trustees on the Ukiah Unified School Board instead of 7. The District is working with the California Voting Rights Act, considering maps to redraw the district after the recent US Census. The elections will be Trustee instead of At Large. They will hold the second of four meetings planned on the matter tomorrow at 5:00 pm. and cover Trustee-Area elections and possible new maps at all of the hearings with public input. As part of the conversations, they are considering moving from 7 members to 5. All of the Trustees have reportedly run unopposed in most elections over the last decade.

A resident of Willits hopped a plane to Ukraine, bringing much needed supplies. The Willits News reports David Caspino went to the war zone two weeks ago, and with him, he brought several large boxes filled with humanitarian aid which the newspaper reports included diapers, wipes, formula and 500 bottles of medication. Caspino was part of the Little Angels Project organization, serving as a combat medic, but says when his time with the organization ended, he still wanted to help, so he extended his stay until this week.

The sentencing has finally happened for a man from Upper Lake convicted in the bludgeoning death of his former partner, and mother of his children. In 2017, Willy Tujays Timmons took a rock to Vanessa Niko, killing her. Yesterday he was sentenced to 16 years to life in state prison. It comes after some delays. He was convicted back in November, for second degree murder, torture, inflicting injury resulting in a traumatic condition and aggravated mayhem, and special allegations of use of a deadly weapon and personally inflicting bodily injury. Niko was a mother to six children, three of them, fathered by Timmons. The two were estranged at the time of her death.

There's a process in place for how Lake County will fill the recently vacated Administrative Officer position. Carol Huchingson announced her retirement last week. Her last day will be April 29th. The Board of Supervisors has approved advertising for the position. The HR department had asked the Supervisors for permission to begin open recruitment by this Friday, and allowing for the position to stay open until the job is filled. The idea to recruit for 2-3 weeks, then interview the first round of applicants around the time Huchingson leaves office. The HR dept. also wants the flexibility to hire an employment firm, if need be. In the meantime, they will look for an interim replacement, if possible so they can train with Huchingson while she's still on the job.

A woman from Clearlake Oaks accused of arson and found to be incompetent to stand trial is finally going to a State Hospital. Tori Brannon was supposed to move to the hospital earlier this year, after the matter was continued from last summer. She was reportedly seen in an area where a fire was actively burning in Clearlake Oaks a day after she was seen yelling at neighbors saying she didn't need to say she was sorry for the fire. She also had previously threatened to burn the area. She was arrested nearby and seen trying to get rid of gasoline, pouring it out on the ground, then trying to soak it up with a blanket, with a lighter in hand. She was held on \$500,000 bail and was thought to have caused over \$600,000 in damage.



Mendocino College Lake Center had its first event since the pandemic started. Last Thursday the Lake Center had almost 200 kids from Kelseyville High, Clear Lake, and Upper Lake High Schools. It was set up to help students look for new educational and career opportunities with Mendocino College. Organizers thanked administrators at Mendocino College Lake Center for making the event a reality, along with many other local organizations. The students toured the college campus and had some snacks together. They're having their North County Center College Day next Thursday, March 31st.

A former police officer in Ukiah has been ordered to sit for a jury trial in May for alleged sex crimes. Sgt. Kevin Murray is accused of several felonies, including rape, burglary, filing false evidence in an investigation, possession of methamphetamine and an AR-15, which is illegal in the state. It should take about three days to choose the jury after they start May 16th. And the trial could last several weeks, unless Murray agrees to a deal. The charges stem from two women accusing him of sexual assault. They will reportedly appear as witnesses at trial. There's also a civil suit against Murray, that

03/24/22 was filed last August.

The state is seeing tinder-dry weather with multiple temperature records made this week. Too hot for early spring, according to the National Weather Service. Some of the records broken Tuesday and yesterday were from about a century ago, when it was last that hot. It was near 90 in parts of Sonoma County, in Ventura County, more inland than near the ocean, it was 88. More north, in Redwood City it was 85, same for Oakland. And Ukiah had its hottest day yet, 90 degrees, the last time it was that hot on that day, was in 1926, when it was 91. Making matters worse, the statewide snowpack yesterday was only 52% of normal.

If you own a car and you're struggling to pay for gas, your luck could be about to change. There's been a lot of talk about rebates, or some sort of stimulus to pay for the skyrocketing fuel costs. Yesterday the Governor announced a plan to send \$400 per car, to a registered California car owner. You're out of luck if you own an electric vehicle or don't use gas. Many businesses who own fleets of vehicles will not get the cash. The Governor estimates the rebates would add up to around \$9 billion. At last check, a gallon of regular gas was still hovering near the \$6 mark. About \$2 more than this time last year, and the highest in the USA. Newsom's plan has to get the green light from lawmakers.

A BOLO alert has been put out by the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office for a man suspected of murder in Guerneville. Mendo Fever reports hearing on the police scanner that Drake Meyer, a white male adult, was wanted. And that he might be driving a 2003 dark gray Ford F150 with a camper shell. He's described as 6 foot 4, 180 pounds, last seen in a dark hoodie. Cops say he could be armed with a knife. The bulletin after a call to an assault last night. Two victims were found, one took themselves to a hospital, the other died.

After a call to a home on East Gobbi St. for a possible overdose, it turned out to be a homicide. That's the word from Ukiah police after the call Tuesday. Paramedics reported to police that it sounded like a suspicious death, so officers also reported to the scene. The apartment manager helped police and medics enter, there they found a 55-year-old woman down in the bathroom, dead. Officers say there appeared to have been a struggle and the victim had apparent trauma to her face and other evidence she was murdered. Police say evidence led them to Drew Price, who the apartment staff knew was in the apartment that morning, and knew him from previous contacts. He was arrested nearby a few hours later and booked on murder charges and held without bail.

Lake and Mendocino counties included in an emergency declaration with more than a dozen other counties due to fall storm damage. The Governor proclaimed the state of emergency for the October storms which tore up roads and other infrastructure. This will free up funds to repair damage and direct Caltrans to ask for federal assistance. The atmospheric river dumped rain across Northern Calif and took down trees and power lines. Some other surrounding counties included, Butte, Contra Costa, Glenn, Humboldt, Napa, Sonoma and Trinity.

Nearly \$5 million dollars is going to the Mendocino City Community Sewer District to help build a new emergency storage water tank. The District applied for a grant in December and was reportedly awarded a \$4.9 Urban and Multi-benefit Drought Relief Program grant from the Department of Water Resources (DWR). The money will go to plan what's needed to construct the 500 gallon water tank for drought times and fire suppression. They're looking at building on Mendocino Unified School District (MUSD) property near Little Lake Road where there are already two school district owned tanks that hold 115,000 gallons. The county also got grant funding for drought relief. Money will go to various cities and water districts, and the Redwood Valley Little River Band of Pomo Indians.

A trio of job fairs are being held by Adventist Health for clinical and non-clinical positions. The announcement that they're on the hunt for mission-minded people to work at Adventist Health Mendocino Coast in Fort Bragg, Adventist Health Howard Memorial Hospital in Willits, and Adventist Health Ukiah Valley in Ukiah. The job fairs are today from 12-5 at Adventist Health Mendocino Coast, Wednesday, April 6, also from 12:00—5:00 p.m. at Adventist Health Howard Memorial and finally on Thursday, April 21st from 12:00—5:00 p.m. at Ukiah Valley Conference Center. Speaking of Adventist Health, the three campuses were lit up in Yellow and Blue yesterday in support of Ukraine.

For more information on job opportunities, please contact Jolee White (707-963-6588, [whitej@ah.org](mailto:whitej@ah.org)) or visit <http://www.adventisthealth.org/careers>.

A new plaque is gracing the Masonic Lodge building in downtown Ukiah. The Greater Ukiah Business and Tourism Alliance's Main Street Program presented the last part of the Historical Building recipient award. For Gerald W. Collier, who was a Mason at the age of 29, and became a master by 34. The plaque in his name. His daughter says the lodge was a major part of his life. A plaque was up in his honor but excluded the date of the original award. Now that has been fixed in his honor. He passed away in April of 2015.

We could soon be done with pandemic money. The state is offering one last chance to apply for COVID rent relief. The last day, next Thursday, a week from today, March 31st. Then starting on April 1st, landlords can start evicting people who have not or cannot pay their rent if the city or county they reside in has no rent relief program in place. Some are urging the Governor and the Legislature to extend the program, citing an upcoming "eviction tsunami". The program will continue on though as the state is reportedly still wading through applications. The state has already paid nearly \$2.5 billion to applicants.

As we pass the 12th anniversary of the Affordable Care Act, Covered Calif. is reminding those who have no healthcare coverage may still be eligible. Right now there is a special enrollment period. Nearly 2 million people signed up for coverage on the anniversary, and the state still says there are record low uninsured rates in the state. The exchange has covered more than 5 million Californians since it first started in 2014. And others have enrolled in the expanded Medicaid plan through Medi-Cal in Calif. As of 2020, the state was seeing a record low uninsured rate of just 6 percent.

A new report says the state has not used state-owned surplus to help with the affordable housing problem. A new audit recommends state agencies hire more people so that they can speed up the process of figuring out which parcels can be developed. The state auditor's office says there's a 2019 executive order by the Governor prioritizing using state-owned land to build more affordable housing. And the agency's interim auditor says quickly creating affordable housing is crucial since there are nearly 1.5 million low-income renters who have no access to affordable homes. So he sent a letter to the Governor with that message.

A large homeless camp in Lakeport is gone. Lake Co News reports the Lakeport Police Department and Public Works staff have removed the site, near the Safeway on some city-owned property known as the Ninth Street extension. Police say the camp was a concern because of safety, sanitary conditions, and fire danger risks. Occupants have been offered help by county homeless outreach organizations. Officials say they have safeguarded personal property that belonged to the people camped there and are working to make sure no similar unauthorized sites pop up

03/25/22 elsewhere in the county.

The California Attorney General's Office is now reviewing sexual assault allegations against former Windsor Mayor Dominic Foppoli. The Press-Democrat reports Sonoma County deputies have finished their investigation and turned their files over for a possible decision on charges. Detectives aren't saying what, if any, charges they think might be warranted. Sheriff's Office spokesperson Sgt. Juan Valencia says he doesn't know how long the prosecutors will take to review the case and how they would announce their findings. The investigation into allegations by 13 women that Foppoli sexually abused them has been going on for just shy of a year now. Foppoli resigned after the outcry over the allegations, first reported by the San Francisco Chronicle early last April. He has since denied doing anything wrong and said earlier this month he expects he will be cleared by what he calls an incredibly thorough sheriff's office investigation. No matter the outcome of the investigation, the lawyer for one of the accusers says a civil suit is likely.

There's a new face on the Middletown Unified School Board. District parent and educator Chris Ochs was sworn in on Thursday night. He fills the seat left vacant when former board member Misha Grothe resigned last month. It has been a turbulent time in the Middletown district, with three other resignations in the last four months and four superintendents in the past two and a half years. There has also been a division over the district's Covid-19 mask policy. The board interviewed two other candidates before selecting Ochs. Members who voted for him say they were impressed by his background as the director of facilities, maintenance, and operations for Calistoga Joint Unified School District. Among other responsibilities there, he has handled a 47 million-dollar master plan and written several grant proposals for the district.

A group of Native Americans is trying to set things straight in Kelseyville. The group wants the name changed as it's a reminder of a pioneer Andrew Kelsey who committed crimes against indigenous Pomo and Wappo people in the mid-1800s. So since the town's main street has a view of Mt. Konocti, the group would like to call the town Konocti instead. It's not the first time it's been attempted either. But Citizens for Healing in Lake County have been drafting an initiative for the name change they hope to get on the ballot in a future election, but not this year.

The Red Bearded Burglar is going to prison for a long time. William Evers who burglarized at least one home in the town of Elk three times, has been sent to prison for 25 years to life. The Press Democrat reports one of his victims says he left holes in the walls at her home and took personal items, but now that Evers has been sent to prison, she feels safer. Evers was finally arrested last November in Albion after being a fugitive for nearly a year. There were a few run ins with locals before he was finally caught. Evers has also been ordered to pay restitution to his victims, of around \$2,500. He pleaded guilty to his crimes, including assault on a police officer. He was also charged with 15 counts of burglary.

Two apartments have been gutted by a fire in Willits. Little Lake Fire reports they got a call yesterday morning about a fire on the first and second floor of a building, encroaching upon the attic. There was also a tenant trapped on a balcony, but firefighters rescued her. She did have burns on her hands from touching hot railings, but apparently said no to medical help. The fire chief says the flames never made it to the attic, and it all started after a stove-top accident. The person who reported the fire said they were cooking and a flame suddenly flared up. They tried using a blanket and it didn't work. Those who lived in the 2 apartments were being helped by the Red Cross.

A pretty good-sized Mountain Lion has been spotted by a family in Fort Bragg. A woman reported their home, which has a porch camera, recorded the large animal on her property near Otis R. Johnson Park. Apparently, there is a creek nearby which may attract the animals. The animal sighting was going to be reported to wildlife officials today.

After a double stabbing in Guerneville, Deputies found the suspect dead. After detectives investigated the incident from earlier week, more details have emerged. Mendo Fever reports a woman called for help from a home, and a car had crashed into the same home. Inside the home, Deputies found a man down with at least one stab wound, who was excessively bleeding. The man died at a hospital. Later Deputies got a call to another stabbing victim who got a ride to the hospital. They identified the suspect later and found his truck, and he was dead inside. They say they believe he acted alone. But they have not released info on a possible motive.

Due to the extreme drought, and no rain in sight, the Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water) started inflating a rubber dam near Forestville. It's part of the drinking water supply process which usually happens in spring or early summer as demand increases. Since there wasn't really any rainfall in January and February, water demands are up earlier than usual. About 600,000 residents in parts of Sonoma and Marin counties get their drinking water from the river. When the dam is fully inflated, which takes a few days, there's a small pool of water in it which Sonoma Water then takes for filtering ponds which also help recharge the groundwater.

Ukiah Police have identified a woman who was found dead in her apartment earlier this week. 55 year old Deborah Garner-Flicker was reportedly killed inside her home and 38 year old Drew Price has been arrested in connection to her death. He has had a history of mental health hospitalizations and was in jail being held without bail. Medics were called to Garner-Flicker's apartment, where the manager said Price was there earlier. It had first been reported as a possible overdose, but police found Garner-Flicker with obvious signs of trauma to her face and signs of a struggle. The victim and suspect had known each other. Police say Price was also served with a restraining order the same day for a family member and that he may have burned his parents rental property down after he was told to move.

The Governor says he has a plan to dull the pain of gas prices at the moment. Governor Newsom announced an \$11 billion package to give money back to Californians because of high gas prices. He says his proposal will also protect residents from volatile gas prices, and advances clean transportation, with three months of free public transportation, fast-tracking electric vehicle incentives and charging stations, and new funding for local biking and walking projects. It could mean as much as \$9 billion in tax refunds for Californians with drivers of gas driven vehicles getting \$400 direct payments per vehicle but capped at two vehicles. The rest addresses climate change.

One man is dead and another in jail for murder after an altercation in a bank parking lot in Ukiah. Police say they got a call to the Wells Fargo bank on S. State Street this weekend for an argument between a couple people, one with a knife. Police found a guy with stab wounds on the ground when they arrived. Police says Leslie Adelman was seen leaving the area holding a knife. They say he tried to resist arrest, but they were able to get him. The victim died in the ER at Ukiah Valley Medical Center. Police say the two are both transients in the area.

03/28/22

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers needs Volunteer Campground hosts at Lake Mendocino. They need people to work at Bushay Campground operating the host booth, monitoring the campground and assisting visitors. It would be about 32 hours of work in exchange for full hookups (sewer, water, electricity).

Apply online: <https://go.usa.gov/xzVTw>

For more information please contact:

Ranger Parker

Sadie.k.Parker@usace.army.mil

707-467-4232

After a HAZMAT spill on Highway 101 outside Laytonville, the highway had to be closed down for a few hours. The Highway was reopened to one way traffic with traffic crews in the area to guide traffic around the mess. About five hours after the incident, the highway totally reopened. The CHP reported closing the highway Saturday night in both directions north of Laytonville after a single car crash that involved an overturned semi.

A man has been arrested in Fort Bragg after a woman is found with visible injuries on her body. The Mendocino County Sheriff's Dept reports getting a call for a welfare check to a home and seeing the woman with injuries they say were consistent with a physical assault. The woman was apparently in a relationship with her alleged assailant, John William Bills, who was found there. Deputies also found a semi-automatic rifle which he is not allowed to have due to a previous felony conviction out of Washington State. He also had a Protective Order so he was not allowed to be around the woman to begin with. He's charged with Possession of Firearm by Convicted Felon, Felony Domestic Violence Battery and Violation of Domestic Violence Protective Order. He was being held on \$25,000 bail.

There's a positive case of the new Omicron Subvariant BA.2 in Mendocino County. The Public Health Office reported the first strain of Omicron is still the most common form of the virus in the state of Calif., but now BA.2 is also rapidly increasing across the state. The first case of the new strain was detected earlier this month and even those vaccinated are at risk. But the office says it doesn't seem to be driving more cases, hospitalizations, or deaths so far. They do say however there is a potential for severe disease for the vulnerable and unvaccinated.

A seminar on how to rescue injured people who may have been trapped in the Ukiah Wastewater Treatment Plant has taken place. Employees at the plant trained all last week with a company from Hopland called Rescue Solutions. Firefighters and Public Works employees learned to use rescue gear. The organizer, a local firefighter for the Hopland Fire Protection District said the majority of deaths in confined-space rescues are of "would-be rescuers" because people try to rush in and help, but they're not trained and become trapped too. Those at the training included Ukiah firefighters and city water crews.

The state auditor's office says the state needs to do more ahead of the record-breaking drought potentially causing another dangerous wildfire season. The report from the Interim Auditor to lawmakers says the new Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety approved of the way utility companies planned to prevent wildfires, but the plans were "seriously deficient." The letter included the plan by the largest utility company in the state, Pacific Gas & Electric, who was responsible for various wildfires over the years. The 91 page report said power companies may be working to get their equipment more fire-resistant, the state has not done enough to be sure the companies prioritize upgrades, especially where they're needed, in high fire-risk areas.

Only the second woman in history, is now the interim chancellor for the CSU system. Jolene Koester has been chosen by the Calif. State University Board of Trustees to run the 23-campus system. The 74 year old is the former president of CSU Northridge where she led from 2000 to 2011. She will replace Joseph Castro who resigned after reports surfaced that he had mishandled sexual harassment complaints against Fresno State's vice president of student affairs when Castro was the president there. Koester told CalMatters the primary focus of her work will be to renew and establish trust. She will fill the spot until they find a permanent chancellor at a yearly salary of \$625,000.

A man who a couple hired to do contracting work at their Willits home has to pay tens of thousands for faulty work at their home. Daniel Hildebrand admitted he worked at the home without a state contractor's license for work in 2018. The Mendocino County District Attorney's office reports Hildenbrand who was also a sometime actor was charged with unlawfully contracting without a required state contractor's license, unlawfully advertising as a contractor without the license, unlawfully charging an excessive down payment for contracting work, and unlawfully failing to carry workers compensation insurance. He has to pay \$75,000 for the shoddy work.

Another extension could be granted for rent relief under a bill during the heat of the pandemic. The Governor and some Democratic leaders are supporting a proposal to extend eviction protections until the end of June. Those who think they're eligible should apply to the state for an extension of the state's COVID rent relief program. The protections were supposed to expire April 1st a day after the March 31st deadline. The new proposal would keep the deadline in place. Last week the state sent money to over 200,000 households. After advocates to extend the program warned of an "eviction tsunami", a spokesperson for the Governor said he strongly supported an extension.

Intro: A bill to extend some eviction protections for another 3 months, is set to be heard in the State Assembly today. The move comes as time is running out for people to apply to the Emergency Rental Assistance Program, which stops accepting applications Thursday. Housing lawyer Tina Rosales with the Western Center on Law and Poverty says people who lost their income as a result of the pandemic should apply now on [housing.ca.gov](https://housing.ca.gov).

:09 "The program will pay 100 percent of back rent and rent going forward for a total of 18 months. Landlords and tenants both can apply."

Tag: The eviction protections are designed to stave off a wave of homelessness because approximately 366-thousand people are waiting for their applications to be processed. According to the state "Housing is Key" website, the program has paid out more than 2-point-4 billion dollars so far; an average of 11-thousand dollars per household.

Second Cut: Rosales says many people whose primary language is not English have had a tough time filing a case, but the kinks are mostly worked out now.

:09 "There were technical glitches and problems with the application, So Spanish- and Chinese-speaking tenants were unable to apply for the program. And now they only have a few

1 days to apply."

Tag: People can apply regardless of their immigration status. The application requires proof of income and proof that the household income does not exceed 80 percent of the median for that area.

That convoy of truckers we heard about in Canada is being duplicated in America and they're headed to Calif. First the American version of truck drivers against COVID restrictions went to Washington, D.C. Organizers say the People's Convoy is coming to Calif. to protest protocols that look to control the outbreak of the deadly virus. The truckers were in DC earlier this month planning to create traffic congestion on the Capital Beltway. They were on the Hagerstown Speedway over the last three weeks with big rigs, cars and campers protesting whatever is left of COVID mandates and they also want a repeal of the pandemic state of emergency.

More info on the case of a couple of men who were in a fight, and one was knifed to death. Ukiah police say they got a call Sunday morning that someone was waving a knife around in the Wells Fargo parking lot on S. State Street. A dispatcher heard yelling in the background as officers got there. They say they saw Leslie Adelman with a knife, walk away from the victim who was down. They say they witnessed the victim fall to the ground and that Adelman would not comply with them. Medics came to the scene, but the victim died at a hospital. Adelman also had moderate injuries and was taken to the hospital, treated and released. He and the victim had been fighting cops say over previous thefts of Adelman's property. Adelman is booked on murder charges.

The man recently arrested in connection to the stabbing death of another man in a bank parking lot had quite the rap sheet. 69-year-old Leslie Adelman, a homeless man from Ukiah is charged for murder for the Sunday morning stabbing outside Wells Fargo on South State Street. Apparently, locals knew Adelman for his various arrests and confrontations. He was previously a paraprofessional in the Ukiah Unified School District. Several online news sites have a list of his arrests over the last five years. Ten arrests for things like having a switchblade in a car, to arson of an inhabited structure and trespassing. Ukiah police say when they pulled up to the bank parking lot last weekend, they saw a man fall to the ground and Adelman walk away with a knife. His arraignment is set for tomorrow.

03/29/22

A nine-year-old boy is lucky to be alive after he got a little too close to the ocean along the coast by the Point Cabrillo Lighthouse. Mom with her twin boys telling them not to get too close to the water's edge, then one of them, Robert Rademaker was caught by a wave and dragged into the sea. But thankfully he grabbed onto a rock and was rescued. The family was visiting friends in Fort Bragg Saturday and decided to visit the lighthouse.

A fire hydrant hit by a car in Willits let its contents loose. Willits Police Department and Willits Utility workers were on the scene last night as water spewed into the area. There was one way traffic for a time while personnel closed off the water, which was less than a half hour later.

Roof Repairs are being completed at Van Damme State Park. The Spring Ranch barn needed some work, so the park service had a warning there would be lights and fans in the overnight hours at the park. They were put in place so bats would not go near the construction work.

After a 911 call to Home Depot, a local man was arrested for trying to take off with a drill. Ukiah police say they responded to the store and found Victor Lucas was trying to leave the store without paying for the drill and when employees tried to stop the guy he threatened them with a knife. Police say he made it out of the store, but another employee followed him and he continued to threaten with a knife, got into a car and took off. The drill was worth about \$150. The man was caught the next day after employees looked at booking log photos and surveillance footage. Lucas was arrested for Robbery and held on \$15,000.00 bail.

The governor's office and five Indigenous California tribes are fighting about whether or not they can renew their gambling compacts with the state. If the deals are not extended some of the casinos would have to close gaming until they can get to some agreement with the state. The Robinson Rancheria in Nice Chairman says if they have to close again, like they did during the first days of the pandemic, it could be devastating. The whole thing has to do with a lawsuit that could have impacted over 60 tribal nations who did a deal with then Gov. Gray Davis in 1999. The contracts were supposed to be renewed in December of 2020, but there's an extension until June 30th. Some tribes are not affected though as their compacts were extended already.

The second transgender judge in the state has been appointed by the Governor. 58-year-old Andi Mudryk was the chief deputy director at the Department of Rehabilitation, and will now serve on the Sacramento County Superior Court bench. The appointment after Alameda Superior Court Judge Victoria Kolakowski was elected as the first openly transgender judge in 2010. Kolakowski tweeted she was glad to "finally have a trans colleague on the bench in California." Newsom was also set to swear in the first Latina to the Calif. Supreme Court yesterday, Justice Patricia Guerrero.

Free at home COVID tests are going to 7 million students and school employees in Calif. The state sent the tests, two in a kit to help try to slow the spread of the virus after spring break. 14.3 million tests are on the way or have already been delivered. The state has a new approach to the pandemic, instead referring to it as an endemic, like season colds and flu, and trying to spread the word to prevent spread, and react swiftly if there are outbreaks. The Governor put out a statement that the state's focused on keeping schools open and students safe, with the SMARTER Plan, which is an acronym for shots, masks, awareness, readiness, and testing. Congressman Mike Thompson has announced Lake County's Woman of the Year. The well-known local businesswoman, Jennifer Strong was named by Thompson. Thompson picks inspiring women each year from his district to showcase their contributions and efforts over the last year. Strong founded Rotary Fire Relief which raised over \$1 million for Valley fire survivors after the 2015 fire. She is also the owner of Strong Financial Network.



A woman has been killed after being involved in a three-car crash on Highway 20. The CHP reports the 49 year was the passenger in a Mini Cooper that was in the crash near Lake Mendocino in Mendocino County Monday night around 5:30 in rainy weather. Witnesses and CHP dash cam footage shows the driver of the Mini was headed east on the highway as a pickup truck was headed west, then a third vehicle, an SUV was behind the truck. The mini drove through standing water, lost traction and spun into the pickup which also spun out and hit the SUV. People driving by stopped to help get the people in the mini, out. But the passenger was not responsive and died at the scene. The CHP says they don't think drugs or alcohol were factors. Two others were also injured in the crash.

As of the last update from the Mendocino County Public Health Office, COVID cases and hospitalizations are way down. There is one case of the new omicron variant, as we told you yesterday, which has been confirmed. As of last Friday, during the public report from the agency, they said only two people were in the hospital. One of them did end up in an ICU bed. There were five cases reported too, way down from the start of the month. This was also the first public update in a few weeks, as the last two were postponed.

The public got to get a peek at the new solar PV systems and various other upgrades at the Konocti Unified School District in Lower Lake. Last Friday, the public was invited along with school board members and the Superintendent Becky Salato as she turned the district's new solar-powered electrical system on. She says the district has been mulling solar electricity for some time, but it just finally made economic sense, noting PG&E rates going up. Not only did they have new solar arrays, but also, protective solar netting and power resiliency through backup power systems.

A controlled burn is planned in the Mendocino National Forest on under 100 acres. The targeted control burn for undergrowth west of Lake Pillsbury and north of the Eel River this week. If the conditions are good for the burn, they're looking at today and Friday for the work with crews on site the whole time and into next week. They say rangers will reintroduce low-intensity fire which can help thin hazardous fuels, restore forest ecosystems and improve safety of local communities. They remind to stay away from the burn area. Smoke could impact nearby roads, so you're warned to slow down, use your headlights and be cautious of fire trucks and support vehicles.

03/30/22

Local art at the Grace Hudson will feature a pop-up show for Adele Pruitt's paintings. From Friday, for nearly three weeks, the artist's work will be on display from personal collections of Ukiah residents, showing off Pruitt's range of technique. Besides her oil paintings, there will be work from her early career with watercolor and starch. The opening is on during the April First Friday Art Walk and the Adele F. Pruitt Memorial which is April 10th at the museum.

Preparations are being made for all who wish to attend. Please RSVP and direct questions to Katarzyna Rolzinski: 707-468-9003 / [katarzyna@pacific.net](mailto:katarzyna@pacific.net).

California law enforcement groups are spending money on the primary and general elections for 2022 with over \$1 million on campaigns for the state Legislature and statewide offices. The latest CalMatters analysis of giving shows just under \$1.2 million, the amount the groups gave in 2020. They're donating big money to the state attorney general's race, mostly to oust the current Atty. General, giving to Sacramento District Attorney Anne Marie Schubert. The Republican looking to oust Attorney General Rob Bonta. Other contributions include the reelection of the state treasurer and several Assembly and Senate races.

The Coyote Band of Pomo Indians have held a protest at the state Capitol to speak out on climate change. Last Friday, March 25th, the "Global School Strike for Climate" was held on the West Steps at the Capitol building. It was co-hosted by the Tribal Chair and the Mendocino County Youth for Climate. It was set to coincide with the international Global School Strike for Climate the same day to not only address global warming, but restoring Native American Land Rights. There were 200 people in attendance including folks from the Sierra Club, the California Native Plant Society, Sacred Lands Native Hands, and others.

Another hat in the ring for the open Middletown Unified School Board seat in June. The special election has attracted Bryan Pullman who is so far only running against school volunteer Charise Reynolds. The special election after a petition to remove a member placed in the seat last year when nearly a dozen candidates were interviewed for two open seats including Pullman and Reynolds. One of the appointed members was challenged by a petition, so now they're holding the special election. Until then, the seat is unfilled. Pullman has been at many board meetings as of late, and has been critical of COVID-19 mandates, including mask wearing.

The Governor has ordered water suppliers to strengthen their drought response but is not calling for more conservation or rationing from residents. Even though some water experts say that should happen, the Governor is leaving the conservation up to water companies and major water wholesalers. It should not be an issue for agricultural water providers or smaller water systems. He did give suppliers an idea to think about: banning irrigation of decorative lawns at businesses and other institutions. The reservoir storage in the state is at 2/3rd's what it should be. Along the North Coast and in Central Calif and California deserts, it's bone dry.

A bill to expand the COVID vaccine mandate in California is being put on hold. As the pandemic numbers wane, Democratic Assemblywoman Buffy Wicks announced she was holding Assembly Bill 1993, which would have required all state workers to be vaccinated by the end of the year. Wicks said the recent drop in COVID cases means there can be more conversations about the bill and the concerns raised by opponents.

The Mendocino County Skunk Train is hosting a fundraiser for Ukraine. The "Train for Ukraine" event this Saturday, April 2nd. There will be two train runs with 100% of the proceeds going to the International Committee of the Red Cross. The routes from both Fort Bragg and Willits, and refreshments will be available. Those riding will get assorted Ukrainian candy and specialty alcoholic Ukrainian beverages are available for those over 21. Riders can get off the train in certain turnaround spots for a half hour or so to relax or play games.

Tickets are \$75 for ages 13 and up, \$30 for ages 2-12 and \$10 for children under age 2. Tickets can be purchased at

<https://www.skunktrain.com/train-for-ukraine/>

The winter snowpack is really not much. Another year of historically dry weather, and less than 50% snowpack. Record breaking early spring weather melted much of the snowpack which measured at 46% of normal for this time of year. The chief of hydrology for the Calif. Dept. of Water Resources says "the snow has been roasting in the dry and sunny conditions". The snowpack was measured in the Feather, Tuolumne and San Joaquin watersheds last Friday. There were mostly sunny skies that day, with summer like weather in some mountainous areas. There is a late season storm coming this weekend though, but that may just be a couple inches of snow for the Sierra Nevada.

Adventist Health Ukiah Valley is welcoming seven new doctors aboard their Family Medicine Residency Program. Starting in June the residents will be counted as the fourth class to continue their medical training at Adventist Health Ukiah Valley. The Director of the Family Medicine Residency Program says they are joining a “robust, rural medicine focused program”. The program started in 2019 to offer new physicians hands-on experience across multiple areas. During their three-year program, they complete rotations in family medicine, obstetrics, intensive care, and other specialties, including sports medicine, plus pediatrics through a partnership with UC Davis Medical Center in Sacramento. They will also work with a first in the country program for homelessness and addiction.

Protestors are back in Guerneville after taking a few weeks off. They’re against gay people. At least their signs say they are. The so-called “Pizza Box Brigade” joined yesterday too as counter protestors with signs painted on the back of pizza boxes against the anti-gay demonstrators in what is known as a queer-friendly town. Some yelling to stop the hate. The counter-protesting group has been handing out empty pizza boxes for anyone to use for signs against the anti-gay religious group who have been having the same sort of protests elsewhere in the state, including at UC Berkeley and in Sebastopol and San Francisco.

03/31/22

A man involved in a murder in Mendocino County a quarter century ago has been arrested in connection to the disappearance and murder of a young woman from Nevada. 18 year old Naomi Irion disappeared from a Walmart parking lot 2 weeks ago. Local surveillance footage caught a man in a hoodie and mask approach her, get into her car, take the steering wheel and take her away. The Lyon County Sheriff’s Office identified Troy Driver as her abductor. Irion’s body was found in a remote area of Churchill County Tuesday. Driver spent time in prison for the 1997 murder of 19-year-old Paul Rodriguez in Willits. He faces kidnapping charges in Irion’s case so far.

The man arrested earlier this week after a stabbing death in a bank parking lot had his bail set. Leslie Adelman was in court but did not enter a plea in the death Sunday morning by Wells Fargo in Ukiah. His bail was set at \$550,000. An argument over stolen property was reported to be the reason for the altercation between the two homeless men. Adelman was also appointed a public defender and ordered to be in court in 2 weeks to enter his plea in the case. James Anderegg is the man who was killed last weekend. He was taken to Adventist Health with severe abdominal injuries and was pronounced dead at the hospital.

A home has been destroyed by a fire in Redwood Valley. The Chief of the Redwood Valley-Calpella Fire Department says the large, single-family, residential home was completely involved when they got there with smoke and flames. Both floors of the home were engulfed in flames, and they’re not sure yet how it started. Mendo Fever reports firefighters surrounded the home to protect nearby vegetation so the fire didn’t spread in dry fuels. Deputies also reported to the scene because firefighters say the homeowner was not cooperating with them. But they just helped them find a place to stay.

The work to annex part of an area outside Lakeport along S. Main St. has been tabled. That's because the Lake Local Agency Formation Commission found local objections to the annexation warranted a protest process. The Commission voted unanimously for a protest hearing on the proposed annexation of 137 acres and 50 parcels south of the city limits. The CEO of the Commission told Lake Co News the process should take another month, but they had no firm start date either. The news site reports the area is the most lucrative commercial corridor in the unincorporated county which has long been the talk of annexation. All looked to be in order to continue until the Commission's meeting a couple of weeks ago.

The state is working to be proactive against wildfire. The Governor's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force has put together a Strategic Plan to Expand the Use of Beneficial Fire for fuel thinning. State officials say beneficial fire or smart burning of brush and fuels can help prevent the ignition of fires and their spread. Leading fire experts and managers put together the plan for 400,000 acres/year by 2025, and one million acres a year eventually. The state had put aside about \$1.5 billion in wildfire resilience last year. Some of the ideas in the plan to have an online fire permitting system, establish a Prescribed Fire Claims Fund, help Indian Tribes and cultural fire practitioners with their cultural burning practices and grow, train and diversify the state's prescribed fire workforce.

More volunteers are needed in Ukiah to help build the Upper City View Trail. The one mile extension will link to Low Gap Park. There are work parties over the next couple of weekends being hosted by the Ukiah Valley Trail Group. The new addition will be on land owned by the city of Ukiah. A crew from the California Conservation Corps began the work Monday, but won't be able to help over the next two weeks, and they wanted it all done for the spring. There are four work parties in all, the first two are this Saturday, April 2nd and Sunday the 3rd at 9am.

As the weather gets warmer and warmer, and they didn't seem to truly hibernate anyway, officials in Lake Tahoe say to be on the lookout for bears. After the Caldor Fire last year and folks had to evacuate, the animals started to wander around areas where people used to live. They went through garbage pails and broke into some homes too, causing garage door damage, breaking car windows and smashing up vehicles. Wildlife officers say the bears are now more comfortable going into areas with more people.

California is considering a program where they'd give farmers money so they don't plant so that more water could flow in rivers and streams to protect habitat. The state's planning on spending almost \$3 billion dollars to allow 35,000 acres of rice fields to be bare. The Calif. Rice Commission says that's around 6% of the regular yearly crop. That could mean as much as 824,000 acre feet more of water to flow through the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta. 325,000 gallons of water is the normal supply for two average households for one year. The money would come from the state and the federal government along with water agencies.

Another scathing report from the Acting State Auditor... this time the hospice care industry. Acting Auditor Michael Tilden's report says the state's had weak oversight of the industry, allowing for massive fraud and abuse which has cost Calif. and the federal Medicare program millions of dollars at the same time putting extremely vulnerable patients in danger. Tilden's audit found over more than a decade a 400% increase in hospice providers, but there was only a 40% increase in need. Many of them are for profit. The report showed many patients were discharged and should have never been admitted.

Anderson Marsh State Historic Park is holding their monthly "Second Saturday" Guided Nature Walk. Next Saturday, April 9th a volunteer docent will guide those in attendance, starting at 8:30 a.m. They will travel the Cache Creek Nature Trail, the Marsh Trail and the Ridge Trail. The hike mostly on even ground, is about 3 miles at a leisurely pace and will last from 90 minutes to 2 hours in length. They say to grab some binoculars so you can possibly spot wildlife on your journey.

Anderson Marsh State Historic Park is located on Hwy 53, between Lower Lake and Clearlake. For more information about the guided walk, email [info@andersonmarsh.org](mailto:info@andersonmarsh.org) or call (707) 995-2658.

The Lake County DA Susan Krones is running again. Krones is endorsed by two retired judges in the county, Robert L. Crone Jr. and Arthur H. Mann. Her message is "experience in criminal law and prosecution is the foundation for effective leadership." She says she was also endorsed by Congressman Mike Thompson. She also spent some time in the U.S. Army as an attorney and has practiced criminal law including specialized training in prosecuting child sexual assault, domestic violence and elder abuse.