



## Assessor

**Assessor Summary Update on Property Tax Rolls** - In response to a request from Supervisor Alpers, here is a summary of the assessment roll information provided the Board of Supervisors at the January 14<sup>th</sup> meeting:

- Under Proposition 13, the annual inflation increase for assessment purposes is limited to a maximum of 2%.
- **For the 2014/2015 annual roll, that increase will be 0.454%**
- **The difference of slightly more than 1.5% translates to a loss in revenue to Mono County of about \$227,000.**
- For 2013/2014, the total assessed value of real property in Mono County was just under \$4.9 billion.
- So far for 2014/2015, the assessed value of real property stands at \$4.86 billion.
- The year-to-year decrease in assessed value is currently \$33.9 million, or 0.69%.
- The Assessor's Office is in the early stages of preparing this year's roll. The initial review properties with existing reduced (Proposition 8) values is underway and the inflation adjustment has not yet been applied.
- At the February Assessment Appeals Board meeting, the Assessor's Office will be recommending the Assessment Appeals Board reduce the value of properties owned by CRE Landco for the years 2010-2013 inclusive. The reduction will result in a refund of approximately \$450,000 in tax revenue. For the 2014/2015 assessment roll, the total assessed value will be reduced by about \$16 million.
- Based on early analysis, it appears that values in Crowley Lake and Walker/Coleville/Topaz will be flat, although there may be changes to individual parcels. Preliminary data for other communities not yet available.
- Between the flat real estate market, lower than expected inflation adjustment, and resolution of this assessment appeals case, this year's assessment roll will be lower than last year.
- There are also large assessment appeals pending with Casa Diablo Geothermal and Mammoth Mountain Ski Area. If these taxpayers were to be completely successful in their appeals, the reduction in taxes over four years would be about \$2.7 million, of which \$814,000 would be Mono County's share.

CONTACT: Assessor Bob Musil, (760) 932-5515

## Behavioral Health

**Mono County Behavioral Health received final approval from the Sierra Health Foundation for the Antelope Community Garden project** - In October 2012, MCBH was awarded a grant of \$24, 854 to build a 7000 square foot community garden on the Antelope Valley Wellness Center property. The community garden is part of MCBH's vision of addressing whole person wellness, specifically food access, nutrition education, physical activity, social support, and community connection needs in the Walker and Coleville communities. These funds were supplemented by Mental Health Services Act funds to provide nutrition education, organic gardening workshops, and wellness activities in conjunction with gardening activities. The project was successfully completed in July 2013 with the invaluable support of

the Public Works Department, Community Development Office, Public Health Department, U.S. Marines, local businesses, and community volunteers of all ages.

Despite the late planting date, 28 lbs of produce from the garden was donated to behavioral health consumers and to seniors through our partnership with the community senior center. This surprising quantity was reached because several of the community gardeners donated 50% or more of their harvest. Moreover, local ranchers and home gardeners donated another 54 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables to be donated to behavioral health, low income, and senior community members!

Throughout the project, MCBH published a monthly newsletter and offered 20 seminars in partnership with the Public Health Department and Inyo Mono Master Gardeners:

- How to build a raised bed
- How to start from seeds (3 sessions)
- Home-made garden marker craft projects (kids) (3 sessions)
- Power Produce Nutrition Workshop for Adults
- Power Produce Nutrition Workshop for kids
- 1-2 x month Healthy Cooking Demo (May-Nov)
- Successful Gardening in the Eastern Sierras
- Introduction to Organic Gardening
- How to Make Compost
- How to Build a Compost Bin from Repurposed Wood Pallets
- How to Build a Low Hoop House

Response from the community was extremely positive. Here are comments from two of our garden volunteers:

*"I wanted to thank you for all your efforts in getting the Antelope Valley Community Garden up and running. The Garden is a wonderful addition to our town; besides providing food, recreation, relaxation and all the other benefits that a garden can provide, it helps create a much needed sense of community for our area - it brings folks together and creates a spirit of cooperation. Saving a portion of each seasons harvest for the local food bank is a great way of creating a solid bond between the Garden and the greater community. Your gardening and cooking skills workshops are presented with knowledge, care and enthusiasm and they are always interesting and informative. I believe that the Garden is one of the best and most positive things to have happen in our community in years; your hard work and dedication has resulted in a project that all local residents can take pride in. Thanks so much for all you have done."*  
~M.L., Community Gardener, Garden Volunteer

*"The progression of the construction of the garden, along with all of the workshops offered to the community was an educational and fun activity to participate in. I enjoyed coming out and checking on everyone's boxes, planting and watering in a community setting. It was nice to come to seminars to learn something new and ask questions about gardening, especially being in such a limited growing area. It was also nice to be a part of the community by getting involved with a local project. My kids also learned a lot about planting, growing and yielding fresh grown veggies. They really enjoyed picking the veggies and eating them. We are all looking forward to an earlier start next year, as well as a more productive yield."*  
~S.S., Community Gardener, Garden Volunteer.

Property before construction

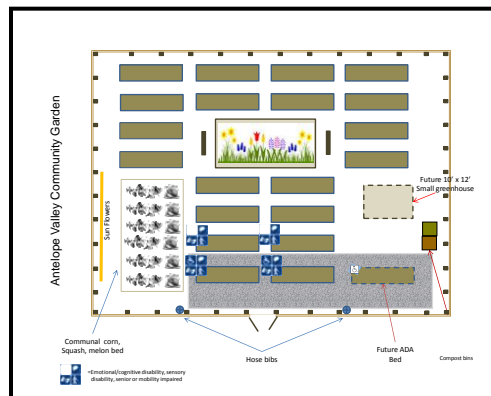


Installation of Major Garden Components



Garden Layout

CONTACT:Christina M. Caro, Ph.D., (760) 924-1740



**Community Development Department**

**Bridgeport Valley RPAC** – At its Thursday meeting the RPAC received a report on a Walker River water sales and leasing study currently under way, with more information to be provided in late summer. The RPAC also reviewed and refined the new trails maps for Bridgeport, Twin Lakes North & South, Virginia Lakes, Bodie Hills, and Poore Lake. RPAC planner Wendy Sugimura reviewed potential Main Street improvement projects for the Active Transportation Program, a new funding source from the State.

**Local Transportation Commission** – At its Monday meeting the LTC reviewed the new Active Transportation Program, a funding source for alternative modes of travel such as pedestrian and bicycle,

with planner Gerry Le Francois. Finance's Megan Mahaffey presented a list of work items for the upcoming 2014-15 Overall Work Program. The LTC also considered a request and resolution from Mono Basin RPAC concerning opening of state highways, such as Hwy 120/Tioga Road, during low-snow conditions. A letter reflecting the commission's concerns will be sent to Caltrans and Yosemite National Park. The Eastern Sierra Transit Authority reviewed a recent transit survey for Chalfant Valley and obtained commission approval for submittal of a grant to update its short-range transit plan.

**Still Grouching** – In concert with CAO Jim Leddy, Wendy Sugimura developed a legislative funding request as part of the County strategy to prevent listing of sage grouse as a threatened species. Staff, including analyst Brent Calloway and planner Courtney Weiche, continued meetings with the US Fish & Wildlife Service to clarify potential listing impacts to private property.

CONTACT: CD Ritter, (760) 924-1804

## **County Administrator's Office**

**Human Resources/Risk Management** - Over the past few months, the Human Resources/Risk Management Department has been encouraging our Managers and Supervisors to participate in an 8 part training series via free webinars offered through the California State Association of Counties (CSAC). The title of this series is Supervisor University, taught by Dr. Steve Albrecht, PHR, CPP, BCC and recent topics with number of Mono County participants included:

### **December**

Team-Building and Team Communication (8 participants)

Workplace Violence Awareness and Prevention (8 participants)

On December 18<sup>th</sup>, Randy Robertson from Trindel Insurance Fund was here to facilitate 2 workshops on Code of Safe Practices. This workshop was focused on the Department Safety Representatives (DSR) and Supervisors that are responsible for creating and updating each Department's Code of Safe Practices (COSP). This was a hands-on session using a matrix guide to practice creating a COSP.

### **January**

Progressive Discipline (8 participants)

Performance Evaluations (8 participants)

On Wednesday, February 19<sup>th</sup> from 9:00-11:30 a.m. the final webinar will cover Ethics & Political Awareness and Service Leadership.

Participation in these learning and professional development opportunities is factored into our evaluation by Trindel, impacting the discretionary funds we receive as an incentive to invest in loss prevention.

CONTACT: Bill Van Lente, (760) 932-5413

**Mono County Employees and local residents send “Thank you” to Marines** – Teresa Neely is working with other employees and community members to send a big **“THANK YOU”** to single soldiers at the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center (MCMWTC) for the sacrifices they have made.

The Marines are having a Super Bowl Party at the Base and Teresa is working to find support for the troops through donated food and drinks. If you would like to participate, drop off *six packs of sodas, chips and cookies to Teresa Neely at her office in Bridgeport By noon January 30<sup>th</sup>*

The Bridgeport Eastern Sierra Community Bank is supplying the sandwiches. It’s not much, but the guys and gals really do appreciate your support. Great community spirit, Teresa!

**Board adopts first ever Legislative Platform** – Attached with the Board Update is the County’s first complete Legislative Platform. These documents reflects the Boards efforts to create focused efforts and consistency as we focus on those decisions being made in Sacramento and Washington policy makers who often dictate what happens to much of Mono County.

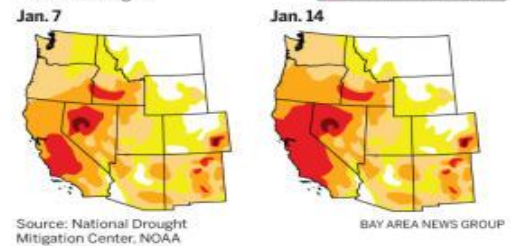
CONTACT: Jim Leddy, (707) 529-4510

**Governor declares drought as California faces worst drought in its history as a state** – Still awaiting details but on January 17, 2014, Governor Brown declared Drought in California as lowest rainfall in State history has been recorded since the founding of the state.

CONTACT: Jim Leddy, (707) 529-4510

### Drought worsens

Drought conditions are spreading across the American West, with the Bay Area now classified as in “extreme drought.”



## Economic Development

**Consumer Trade Shows** – The International Sportsmen’s Expo in Sacramento last weekend was a great success. Jeff Simpson organized and staffed the Mono County booth along with wonderful volunteers, Pam Hamic and Chris Long, from Walker/Coleville. Show attendance appeared to be up from last year, with retailers reporting a considerable increase in boat sales, year-over-year. Mono County had about 550 people signing up for the “enter to win” lead generating contest, gave away over 2000 calendars and Visitor Guides, and interacted with many more potential visitors to the Eastern Sierra. The Bay Area Travel & Adventure Expo is next weekend in Santa Clara; Mono County’s booth is part of the Yosemite Experience Pavilion with other gateway partners.

**Public Relations/Media Coverage** – Our January press release entitled “Hiking AND Skiing? Mono County’s Unusual Winter” was released this week. A number of online publications picked it up immediately, eg: <http://www.digitaljournal.com/pr/1684469>. The nationally-syndicated “Travel with Stephanie Abrams” radio show has requested an interview on Tuesday. The show has 6 million listeners nation-wide and the Mono County interview will air on January 26. Unrelated to the press release but also very positive, LA Times reporter, Chris Erskine, highlights June Lake in this story that ran January 10 in the LA Times Travel section: <http://www.latimes.com/travel/la-tr-june-escape-20140112,0,6284375.story#axzz2qEzsTsPa>

**Community Event Marketing Fund** – Over a dozen grant applications have been received for the Mono County Tourism & Film Commission’s “Community Marketing Event Fund.” The Commission will review the applications and allocate funding on January 28 at their regular meeting in Mammoth Lakes.

**Need to Change** -- Staff will attend the US Forest Service’s Public Workshop on the recently released preliminary “Need to Change” document on Thursday, January 30 from 5-9pm at the Inyo National Forest Supervisor’s Office, 351 Pacu Lane Suite 200, in Bishop. This is part of the ongoing Forest Service Management Plan Revision process. The recently-completed Forest assessments, Bio-regional assessment, and the preliminary “Need to Change” can be viewed on-line at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/r5/landmanagement/planning>. Feedback received by January 24, 2014 will be incorporated into the workshop, but all feedback is welcome until January 31, 2014.

CONTACT: Alicia Vennos, (760) 924-1743

## **Public Health**



***Health Officer Urges Flu Vaccination before Peak Season - TAKE HOME MESSAGE: While we are seeing an increase in flu activity in California, it is not too late to get vaccinated against the flu.*** California, and the Eastern Sierra, is seeing an accelerated increase in flu activity over the past few weeks. In fact, as of last week, the flu is now considered widespread throughout California for the first time this season.

## **Public Health**

Prevent. Promote. Protect.

While influenza activity varies from year to year and is unpredictable, California generally sees an increase in cases in late December or early January and it often peaks in February or March. According to all indicators, influenza activity in California has been showing a steady increase for the last few weeks. Currently, there are more hospitalizations at this point than expected, based on historical trends. This increase is earlier than last year, but does not necessarily translate into a season that is more severe.

For the most recent reporting period, there have been seven reported and confirmed influenza deaths in persons < 65 years of age. Twenty-eight more deaths are under investigation. The H1N1 strain appears to be the predominant strain so far this flu season and is one that is contained in the current flu vaccine. You may recall that this strain tends to particularly attack those under 65 years of age.

The best defense against the flu is getting vaccinated. This year's vaccine is an excellent match against this year's influenza strains. There is no shortage of vaccine in the Eastern Sierra and it is not too late to get vaccinated. Our flu season may not peak for several more weeks, so we encourage everyone to get vaccinated to protect not only themselves, but also their household members, and our communities. Vaccination is recommended for everyone over six months old, but is particularly important for those persons at higher risk of severe influenza, such as pregnant women, and persons with certain underlying medical conditions.

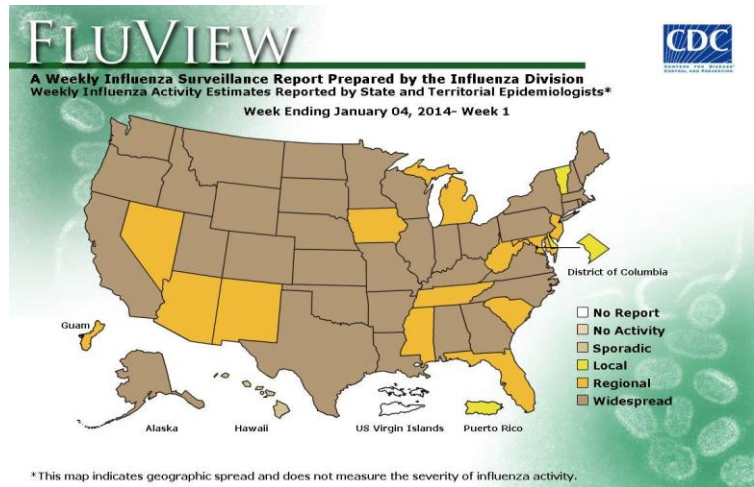
In addition to getting vaccinated, it's important to practice good hand washing and other good health habits. People who are ill should take actions to stop the spread of germs such as:

While sick, limit contact with others – stay home from work or school!

Cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, with your sleeve or elbow

Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based rub

Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth  
Those at highest risk - the elderly, pregnant women, infants, or those with other health conditions - who show flu symptoms should contact their physician immediately in order to get the most effective treatment. Symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches and fatigue.



Visit your healthcare provider, pharmacist or health department to get immunized!

CONTACT: Dr. Richard O. Johnson, M.D., MPH, (760) 914-0496

## Public Works

**Shout to Vianey White for federal audit kudos!** - Vianey White just successfully completed an audit by Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) on the School Street Plaza. The audit was two days of very thorough investigation by two staff from FHWA. Miguel A. Ramos, Transportation Engineer and lead on Audit to commented to Jeff Walters:



“...Your file organization made finding documents really easy. Up to this moment we have no negative findings for the project. We will be working on our reports and the final analysis of the data we collected last week and if we need anything else we will let you know. You should not expect to hear anything from us, unless we need additional documentation.

It was a pleasure working with you.

Thanks,

**Miguel A. Ramos**

*Transportation Engineer*

*FHWA - California Division - Project Delivery Team”*

This response reflects Vianey’s great efforts. Way to go, V!

CONTACT: Jeff Walters, (760) 932-5459

## Sheriff’s Office

1. Sheriff deputies served various search warrants this week which netted multiple arrests for narcotics violations. Several of these arrests were for sales of methamphetamine directly across the street from Coleville Schools.
2. Sheriff deputies, along with CHP handled a call on Wednesday in the area of Lee Vining which dealt with an 'endangered missing person' out of Nevada. After some time the individual was finally located, and was detained as he was a possible suspect in crimes which occurred in Nevada (Stolen Vehicle & Arson of a residence). The individual was taken to Mammoth Hospital where he was evaluated by ER staff as well as Mono County Behavioral Health. The individual was ultimately released to a relative, with charges pending out of Nevada.
3. Budget was turned in to County Finance with adjusted numbers.
4. Orbacom project continues to move forward, although with some carpet install issues, a delay might be inevitable in the project.
5. Staff attended an OHV Grant meeting in an attempt to garner more grant funding for our office.
6. The Sheriff attended a meeting with multiple law enforcement department heads from both Mono and Inyo Counties, as well as, State law enforcement to continue to keep open dialogue relating to law enforcement issues.

CONTACT: Sheriff Ralph "OB" Obenberger, (760) 932-7549

**MONET Activity in North County** - Within the past few weeks, the Mono County Narcotics Enforcement Team (MONET), with the assistance of the Mono County Sheriff's Office, has completed several narcotics related investigations in the Walker/Coleville area.

During the last weeks of December, as part of a narcotics investigation, MONET agents, and the Mono County Sheriff's Office, conducted a search warrant investigation at a residence in Coleville. After several alerts within the residence from narcotics detection K9 "Tara", indicating the presence of narcotics, the subsequent discovery and recovery of multiple prescription narcotics; glass smoking devices; a digital scale; two (2) used hypodermic needles; and plastic bindles led to the arrest of two individuals that were booked into the Mono County Jail in Bridgeport without incident. A third party was arrested, in conjunction with this investigation, by the Douglas County Sheriff's Office in Nevada and transported to the Mono County Jail without incident.

Floyd Hancock, age 55, of Coleville, CA, and Tammy Braier, age 53, also of Coleville, CA, were arrested for possession of a controlled substance and possession of drug paraphernalia. Michael Braier, age 29, of Coleville, CA, was later located in Nevada and arrested for the sales of a controlled substance within 1000 feet of a school and possession of drug paraphernalia. Mr. Braier is currently in custody in the Mono County Jail. Charges for all three individuals are pending with the Mono County District Attorney's Office.



The following week, as part of a separate ongoing narcotics investigation, MONET agents, and the Mono County Sheriff's Office, conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle traveling northbound on Hwy 395 through Coleville. The narcotics detection K9 "Tara" was requested and a sniff and search of the vehicle was conducted. A physical search of the vehicle was conducted after "Tara" indicated the presence of narcotics in the vehicle. The discovery and recovery of ecstasy; steroids; and prescription narcotics led to the arrest of one individual who was transported and booked in the Mono County Jail without incident.

Robert Underwood, age 22, of Gardnerville, NV, was arrested for the possession of a controlled substance and sales of a controlled substance. All charges are pending with the Mono County District Attorney's Office.

CONTACT: Jennifer M. Hansen, (760) 932-5279