

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a sunset over a body of water. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright orange glow and a long, shimmering reflection on the water's surface. In the distance, a suspension bridge is visible against the sky. In the foreground, a small motorboat is moving across the water, leaving a white wake.

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Courtesy of the Oroville Mercury-Register

Photo by David Neilsen



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Code blue:

It's time to rethink how we use our water

By **LINDA DAHLMEIER**
Oroville Mayor

When I think about Oroville, I try to look at the bigger picture. I ponder writing about each and every accomplishment or disappointment one by one, but that information is what we go through at each City Council meeting.

Instead, I like to consider what our community looks like from a bird's-eye view. When I do this, water always comes to mind.

A river can gradually alter its course over time and once a bend heading in one direction is now heading a new way ... a change so gradual that we might not even notice it in our lifetime. Or sometimes it can be a tsunami — change happens so quickly you barely have time to negotiate the waters before the big wave hits.

In either case, we must be prepared if we are to sustain, live and thrive as a community.

Sustain. What does sustain or sustainable really mean?

Sustain: to make something continue to exist; to withstand something and continue in spite of it; to provide somebody with nourishment or the necessities of life.

Sustainable: able to be maintained, to make the most of natural resources without destroying the balance of an area ... usu-



Dahlmeier

ally applied to ecological or agricultural. We have both.

This past year has been history-making not only in the country but in the state of California. It is a pivotal time. Many of our state's cities have lost everything and had to file bankruptcy. Many more are on the brink of the same.

Oroville is and will continue to be one of the fortunate ones. But it will take hard work, sacrifice and the love of our community to sustain our future.

Oroville — to withstand something and continue in spite of it... But we can't do it alone. We need to safeguard our natural resources and rethink how we will share our local water in the future — and that future is here.



Many of you know that I have become active in the water world attending meetings that deal not only with local water issues but state issues as well. Amazingly, I am often the only person from the north state, and two things come to mind when I think of these meetings:

1. There will never be enough water for everyone's needs; that's just the fact.
2. We are the only blue area left in the state. Blue stands for

■ See **MAYOR**, 9



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Ty Barbour/Staff File Photo

In this photo taken on Dec. 31, 2012, looking toward the Highway 162 bridge, houseboats are moored on Lake Oroville.

Let's have some fun in the sun

Lake Oroville, State Parks facilities beckon with spring weather

By **MICHAEL HUBBERT and AMANDA SPEER**

Warm sunshine, longer days and the greening of our foothill grasses and trees bring a renewed energy to our community, prompting us to get outside to enjoy the weather.

The Lake Oroville State Recreation Area offers numerous opportunities for Northern California families to come out and play.

The Forebay Aquatic Center provides summertime instruction and rental of canoes, kayaks and paddle surf boards. Water skiing, house boating and world-class fishing in the picturesque Sierra Nevada foothills is what Lake Oroville is renowned for, but California State Parks staff work year-round to provide recreational and educational experiences that appeal to everyone.

Bidwell Bar Day kicks off Feather Fiesta Days in Oroville during the first week in May. The old Bidwell Bar toll house and suspension bridge at Lake Oroville has been the site for the

Bidwell Bar Day celebration for more than 30 years. A generation of Oroville residents has brought their families out to experience this free pioneer fun where costumed docents recreate life in the 1850s.

This spring, the annual Bidwell Bar Day celebration of California's gold rush will be from noon to 4 p.m. on Saturday, May 4. The parks day-use fee is waived for this special event.

Children can dip their own candles, make corn-husk dolls, teasel combs, tap out tin art, weave a bracelet, or string a pine-nut necklace. Older kids like to challenge the house with a winning hand in the faro card game. A full venue of dancing, music and an old-west melodrama ends the festivities with laugh-a-minute slapstick hilarity.

A few dollars will provide an opportunity to pan for real gold, buy handmade gifts for keepsakes, and even get "married" by a shady preacher.

Visitors can also buy a historic banger-on-a-stick, beans and

■ See **LAKE**, 8

LAKE

From 7

a soft drink so your tummy's full even if your pockets are not.

The interpretive staff at the Lake Oroville Visitor Center has a whole summer of fun-filled activities for every member of the family. From special booth activities at the Oroville Pow Wow, Operation Dry Water, the CAST fishing day to the Salmon Festival, there is an activity for everyone.

Weekly programs include traditional Saturday evening campfire programs at Loafer Creek Campground, hands-on learning fun in our Junior Ranger programs, as well as gold panning demonstrations. These interpretive programs showcase State Parks' time-honored free programs for our community.

Docent-led Nature Walks every Saturday morning are offered free to the public. Miles of trails around the lake offer a different route every week to make fresh discoveries. A new trail beyond Potters Ravine up the North Fork of the Feather River has been completed this past season to challenge serious hikers, cyclists and equestrians.

The annual summer Speaker Program on Wednesday evenings at the Visitor Center Theater features local experts on natural and cultural history for adults and hands-on wildlife presentations for the whole family.

Crafty youngsters can make and take a free eco-friendly project at weekend Nature Creations workshops every week, all summer long. And little ones have a program of their own, the Junior Cub program, that features stories, crafts and a lesson on nature.

Partnerships with other agencies and groups mean more activities for everyone. The park interpretive staff are again partnering with the Aquatic Center to assist with Moonlight Paddles (contact the Aquatic Center directly to register).

The summer season culminates with a Native Ways Celebration that features local Maidu skills, crafts, music and food on the Labor Day weekend.

State Parks staff also offers booth activities at the Hooked on Fishing event at Bedrock Park.

Details about these programs and events are available by calling the Lake Oroville Visitor Center at (530) 538-2219. Make sure you visit the Lake Oro-



Barbara Arrigoni/Staff File Photo

Families enjoy the sunshine and swimming at Loafer Creek Campground on June 16, 2011.



Bill Husa/Staff File Photo

Jacob Doering of Oroville fishes near the Lake Oroville Dam on May 3, 2012.

ville Visitor Center Facebook page for information and after-program visuals.

Most of these summer programs are offered at the Lake Oroville Visitor Center above the dam at the end of Kelly Ridge Road. These events are accessible to people with disabilities. If you need specific accommodations or want more information, call 530-538-2219.

Lake Oroville is the result of the nation's highest dam with an elevation of 770 feet above the river bed below. It is

California's second largest reservoir at 15,000 acres and 167 miles of shoreline.

Campsites around the lake can accommodate RVs, tent campers, horse campers, and even boaters who can find primitive, remote sites or Oroville's unique floating camp sites complete with toilet, picnic table and locking storage unit.

Lake Oroville State Recreation Area is a place to experience, a place where one can experience a culture that contributes to the fabric of who we are as a nation.

MAYOR: Water

From 6

water.

Water is vital to sustaining any community or continent for that matter. There is a water crisis and we need to be prepared. We are the beginning of the State Water Project and decisions that are made about water throughout the state affect us all. So, let's come together and rethink how we share our water.

Instead of leasing our user rights to the highest bidder for use in their community, we could consider telling them, "If you want our water for jobs and housing, then bring them here."

Why not? Our children deserve good jobs and good homes and our local water is a key asset that most other communities do not have. By creatively using one of our most valuable resources, we will create a sustainable future for generations to come.

Water is the single most necessary element, but strong, healthy families are the single most important gift to any community. And I cherish each and every one of you.

That's why I am making a concerted effort to gather job requests from our youth and partnering with other local groups to help develop ways to mentor and bridge the gap between local businesses and the classroom.

By doing so, I hope to help all children reach their full potential. However, mentoring and positive reinforcement are only part of the equation. We must actively seek cutting-edge ways to educate and supply our students with the best tools our



Ty Barbour/Staff File Photo

Mike Seeber and his dog Bryce jog across Oroville Dam on Dec. 31, 2012.

money can buy so they will be prepared for the future.

I hope after they graduate, go to college, study a trade or just roam the world that they come back to Oroville.

With our quality natural resources, well-educated and mentored children and a willing workforce, our opportunity to create the future we desire is just around the bend.

Like the river, we will continue to move. We might change direction from time to time, but with combined efforts from all of us, our city will be sustained — and we will live and thrive.

As always, I am grateful to serve as your mayor.

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Changes in health care on the horizon

By DR. RICHARD THORP

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times," Charles Dickens begins his novel "A Tale of Two Cities."

Communities in California face a similar paradox with the explosive changes facing medicine and health care delivery in the next decade. Disruptive and transformative change is rapidly unfolding in response to these forces:

- An aging population.
- A growing shortage of physician and non-physician clinicians.
- Society's unwillingness to address end-of-life issues.
- Society's unwillingness to address adverse personal behaviors.
- A growing undercurrent of consumerism in health care today.

Dramatic, beneficial changes in technology, surgical techniques, diagnostic imaging and the development of personalized medications are beginning to occur. However, these advances may not be available to all because we are

Richard Thorp is a Paradise internal medicine physician who is president-elect of the California Medical Association. He has been active in health care policy development for the last 20 years. These statements are his own and not necessarily representative of the members of his group or of the California Medical Association.

increasingly unable to afford these costly advances. As a result, health care as we've known it is being disrupted and transformed through efforts to bring cost-effective, personalized, safe and excellent health care to all of our citizens.

The situation calls to mind an old Chinese proverb, "May you live in interesting times." There has never been a more interesting time to be a physician or non-physician clinician in the history of medicine than today.

There have been many changes in the practice of medicine since I began in the



Thorp

field of internal medicine more than 30 years ago. But they will pale in comparison to the change that will occur in medical practice and health care delivery over the next 10 years.

The following are just a few of the potential changes that we anticipate:

- Advances in surgery that will allow your surgeon to practice your operation to perfection on a computerized simulation of your body, pre-program a robot to assist with the surgery and then perform it flawlessly.

- Minimally invasive surgery that will allow the repair of heart valves with a catheter introduced through the groin without opening the chest or bypassing the heart circulation.

■ See HEALTH CARE, 11

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HEALTH CARE

From 10

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- Most important, these changes will all be done within a culture of safety.

However, to provide these advances to all who need them, the delivery of care will need to be transformed as well. America faces a pandemic of chronic illnesses, including diabetes, heart attacks and strokes, high blood pressure, and adult and childhood obesity.

We have learned that chronic disease is best managed with a team of professionals, such as physicians, nurses, diabetic educators and physical therapists, to name just a few.

Too often, these clinicians work in their own “silos” without direct access to each other or effective communication. Teams of these professionals need to be organized around the needs of each patient.

The Affordable Care Act (“Obama Care”) is celebrated by many as the beginning of improved health care. However, the law is not so much about reforming health care as it is about reforming insurance.

For instance, insurance coverage will expand under the Medi-Cal program. Managed-care programs have already started reorganizing Medi-Cal delivery in several large urban areas and are scheduled to expand to all rural counties, including Butte County, starting in June. This will be for all Medi-Cal programs, including eligible people under the Affordable Care Act, children in the Healthy Families program, seniors and people with disabilities, and those who qualify for both Medicare and Medi-Cal (dual eligibles).

Also, the state’s health insurance exchange, Covered California, will work to see that individuals not eligible for Medi-Cal or Medicare have insurance. It will provide a statewide market with insurance plans competing on an even playing field for the business of individual consumers who do not receive health insurance through their employment. Subsidies are to be provided based on income. The exchange is just now developing but promises to be ready for business by the deadline of Jan. 1.

Currently, doctors, non-doctor clinicians and hospitals in Butte County are finding ways to improve health care delivery. They are using electronic records and developing several different ways of securely sharing patient information through so-called health information exchanges. These will allow doctors and hospitals to communicate electronically, minimizing the duplication of services and making health care more efficient.

They are developing physician-led teams to provide a cost-effective, high-quality, patient-centered network designed specifically for the needs of people in Butte County.

They are reorganizing so that the consumer is the decision-maker at the center of health care, just as in any other industry.

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Miranda Anderson, Kelly McNichols,
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FRRPD strives to fulfill goals

By VICKI COOTS

Feather River Recreation and Park District is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year. FRRPD is headquartered at 1875 Feather River Blvd. The district encompasses 735 square miles serving 13 communities ranging from Honcut to Cherokee and from Thermalito to Berry Creek. These communities are represented by five board members elected at large.

Our Master Plan, mission statement and goals guide us.

The increase in population and proportion of seniors living within the district suggests an increasing demand for recreation opportunities, facilities and programs for these users.

Master Plan themes from our community members were to provide additional maintenance and improvements, to expand existing parks and facilities, to expand recreational programs, to add patrols and security to parks and trails, and to upgrade unpaved trails around the Feather River and in rural areas. The district aims to maintain free public access to our parks.

Now, we are at a crossroads to restructure our finances and workforce, in order for us to fulfill the goals and objectives we see for the FRRPD.

The desire of the board over the next year or so is to bring the district back to solvency by making some difficult decisions initially. Then, we would like to reach out to all those who have the skills and ability to create programs and other revenue-generating ventures to bring their ideas to us for possible implementation.

I feel very comfortable in stating that each board member is open to receiving calls, emails or other methods of correspondence to hear the concerns and/or suggestions of our constituents.

The Board of Directors for the Feather River Recreation and Park District is very pleased to be moving forward into a new era of fiscal responsibility and representative government. It has been a bit of a challenge for us these first few months, but we have been blessed to have some extraordinary help through our interim attorney and general manager, Jeff Carter and Tom Lando respectively.



Ty Barbour/Staff Photo

Martin Luther King Park in Oroville is seen in this photo taken on Feb. 12.

We would also like to thank the many folks within this district for their overwhelming support as we worked through and continue to work through the many hurdles that we faced and will face.

It is our hope and vision to join forces with the city, the county and other local agencies in the next year to maximize all the resources in Oroville to the benefit of the community at large.

There is so much potential with all the things the greater Oroville area has to offer, i.e., the river, the lake, the dam, and the most recent purchase, the state-of-the-art gymnastics/community facility.

The current Board of Directors is most amenable to making this happen.

Again, we are pushing toward accomplishing many positive things. One of the first things we have been striving to complete at the outset is the work that was promised for the Martin Luther King

Park. We are quite happy to report that project is going forward, and our prayer is that it is complete by the end of summer 2013.

Along with the project at MLK, the board is also preparing to interview and bring on board a permanent attorney and general manager. These endeavors are time-consuming but necessary to the stability and public trust of the district.

Butte County has numerous skilled, talented and possibly world-class people willing to share their gifts with others. It is overwhelming to witness the folks who have stepped up to work together with us in just these first few months.

What a rich environment we all have here — beautifully resourced, and ready to be shared among the people of Oroville, California, the nation and yes, even the world. Let us actively work together to make that happen.




Coots



Longtime Oroville residents and friends Dennis Jagoda, Weldon Papa and Walt Hancock paddle kayaks among salmon in the Feather River near the Green Bridge on Sept. 26, 2011. They paddled around up toward the fish ladders and then down to Riverbend Park. They said the journey takes about an hour, and they have close encounters with salmon along the way.

Ty Barbour
Staff File Photo



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Oroville Church Directory

Fourteen years ago fresh out of the California State University, Sacramento teaching credential program, Kasia Heinert new principal to St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic School, stood in her very own classroom in utter awe as the then 24 year old had one week to get ready for her incoming seventeen 7th and 8th graders. She began her teaching career at Our lady of Lourdes in Colusa under the direction of Father Roy Doner and Principal Barbara Genera. She taught a self-contained 7/8th combination class, as well as 6th grade Math class, for the first six years of her career.

After much thought and contemplation, Kasia decided to make a career move over to Notre Dame, Marysville to be closer to home. Ms. Heinert was overjoyed with this move since Notre Dame was her childhood elementary school. Kasia taught 4/5 and 5/6 combination classes for three years at Notre Dame until the school closed due to declining enrollment. From there, she and her co-worker, Kelly Kemmerly, spent the summer of 2008 writing a charter to start a new school for Notre Dame families that were without a school. After many hours of toil and labor, in July of 2008 Marysville Unified School District passed Mrs. Kemmerly and Ms. Heinert's charter. This was the birth of New Day Charter Academy.

Working in the public sector for two years gave Ms. Heinert time to think about the different roads she had gone down during her career. While she enjoyed her time in the public school, she felt that there was always something missing. What she missed most was being able to share her faith with her students. "I remember many discussions my 7th and 8th graders would have that left me dumbfounded that a 13 year old had such amazing depth in their faith. I missed that in a public school."



She jumped at the chance to get back to her "roots." This led her to Oroville and to St. Thomas the Apostle. Not only was she back where she felt she belonged, she was also working with Father Doner again. Two years as the ¾ teacher at St. Thomas gave her that renewed sense of being that she felt she was missing.

At the end of last school year, Father Doner came to her asking her to take on a new challenge in her life. He was asking her to prayerfully consider taking on the principal's position, as former principal, Jim Stefaniak, was retiring at the end of the 2011-2012 school year. The first person that she turned to for guidance in this decision was her father, James Heinert, retired superintendent of Meade School District in South Dakota. "It's in your blood Kasia, I've seen this quality in you from the beginning in what he told me." with a gentle push from her parents and friends, Kasia now sits fourteen years later in an office instead of a classroom. "My classroom grew from seventeen 8 and 9 years olds to a school of 97 and five teachers. I absolutely love my job. This has been the best decision I've made career-wise."

By Tamara Lander



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Feather Fiesta Days fun



People enjoy the car show during Feather Fiesta Days in downtown Oroville on May 8, 2010. Feather Fiesta Days has been Oroville's hometown celebration for more than 70 years. Festivities feature fun for the whole family, including the Grand Parade, craft faires, mini-festivals and a chili cook-off.

Representing Oroville City Fire, Bill Buckhout doles out chili for patrons at the Chili Cook-off during Feather Fiesta Days festivities in downtown Oroville on May 8, 2010.



Jason Halley/Staff File Photos

People ride in the 1914 LaFrance fire engine during the Feather Fiesta Days parade in downtown Oroville on May 8, 2010.

Safety in the city

By **BILL LaGRONE**
Oroville Police Chief

The Oroville Police Department has experienced a very successful year. Through the support of the City Council, the Police Department has been kept at near-full staffing levels. While other surrounding police departments have suffered cuts in staffing, ours has remained somewhat constant.

The Oroville Police Department is currently staffed by 23 sworn officers. Full staffing would be 26 sworn officers. This staffing level has not changed for over 30 years, despite the city growing and the demands increasing. Staffing has been kept at the same level as it was in the 1980s.

Despite the lack of growth in staffing levels, the Oroville Police Department is serving the citizens of Oroville admirably. The focus of the Police Department for the past two years has been to increase our level of efficiency and to reduce crime in the city. I believe to accomplish these goals we must perform at a high level, be accountable for our actions and be committed to providing great customer service. This formula should ensure our success.

This new attitude has resulted in increased activity among the officers and many new successes. Last year the Oroville Police Department increased overall field activity. This increased activity is reflected in the number of arrests, citations issued and citizen contacts made by our officers. These activities have been reported to the City Council each month in the Police Department's monthly report. If you are interested, visit the city of Oroville website under Council Agenda to view the monthly reports.

These types of contacts were not the only increased activities. Last year, other activities included 2,400 city park patrols, 950 downtown foot patrols and numerous K-9 demonstrations and neighborhood crime-prevention meetings.

In order to ensure these continued successes, it will be necessary to work with the city to make sure that staffing levels remain constant. In the event the fiscal situation of the city requires downsizing, the tough decision-making regarding levels of service will have to be undertaken by the City Council.

Since the changes brought by Assembly Bill 109 prison reform, the Police Department has been working closely with our partners at the Butte County Sheriff's Office and the Butte County Probation Department. Sheriff Smith and Undersheriff Honea have been on the leading edge of this reform.

The new and innovative ideas from the Sheriff's Department have made these sweeping changes more palatable and ensured that offenders are held accountable. Not only are offenders being held accountable for their behavior, but the overall problems that each bring with them are being addressed.

All of these ongoing activities and the partnership with the Sheriff's Department ensure the overall feeling of safety in our town. It is our privilege to serve this community and we look forward to promoting the image of Oroville and improving the quality of life by contributing to the safety of this community.



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This could be an 'aha' year for small businesses

By **MARC NEMANIC**

Recently I read a news article bemoaning the 2012 drop in gross domestic product growth in the fourth quarter.

Curiously, personal income was up 2.2 percent, business purchases were up 12.4 percent, and housing moved up by 15.4 percent.

So what is the problem?

Well, federal defense expenditures dropped by a staggering 22.2 percent. This number makes a very important point in the midst of the yelling and posing by some elected officials.

Conceptually, it is quite simple. Private spending + public spending = the economy in total, as a formula it is $a + b = c$.

In other words, if one part of the equation is dropping (public spending), then the other part of the equation (private spending) has to be growing at a faster rate. This is a fact, not ideology. It is arithmetic at its most basic.

Public spending will be dropping into the foreseeable future. According to the



Jason Halley/Staff File Photo

People shop in downtown Oroville on Aug. 7, 2009.

■ See **BUSINESS**, 21

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left to right: Wayne, Steve, Clint & Dean.

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BUSINESS

From 20

Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, many suggest that another \$1.5 trillion of deficit reduction in the next 10 years will stabilize the federal debt, but it is just not so.

Increasing health care costs, an aging population and increasing interest payments will likely put substantial pressure to limit federal spending for as long as the eye can see. We may be talking about as much as \$3 trillion over 10 years, or \$300 billion annually in deficit reduction.

In a word, we are on our own when it comes to economic growth and business vitality — all solutions will be local.

There is a lot of idle money, held privately, sitting on the sidelines. This crucial money is sitting there because there is no perceived local alternative in developing and diversifying our economy.

In some ways, we as local residents need to embrace our roles as economic stewards, seeking ways to reinvest our time and money here where it does the most good.

We need to see our local economy as

Marc Nemanic, 60, is the executive director of 3CORE, a community development financial institution, providing financing, mentoring and economic development services to the Butte, Glenn and Tehama County region.

an ecosystem which functions as a unit. An ecosystem where public and private expenditures seek to create platforms to nurture business growth, to focus capital where it is needed. It can create successful business models that harness local innovation and put boots on the ground working with local businesses: problem-solving, connecting and networking for resources to grow and prosper.

Thus far we have taken the first steps in this journey. The North Valley Community Foundation and 3CORE, through the generous help of Wells Fargo Bank, have created the Business Vitality Seed Fund.

This fund is focused on seeding small emerging companies with money, mentoring and networking — and it is now open to interested donors who want to leverage the tax deductibility of the seed fund to help local businesses.

3CORE, with the assistance of Bank of America, successfully obtained \$1 million from the U.S. Small Business Administration to open a Small Business Financing Fund, now accepting loan applications.

Later this year, 3CORE will be unveiling an Early Stage Fund, funded entirely by local people, to move companies on the path to growth.

3CORE, the Alliance for Workforce Development, the Chico Economic Stewardship Network, the Chico Chamber of Commerce, the city of Chico, Innovate North State, The Center for Economic Development, the Small Business Development Center and others are working together, where it makes sense, to accelerate business growth, to bring resources to bear when it matters most.

Within our reach are pooling local capital; leveraging public and private donations; convening local talent and mentors with growing companies; and creating products and networks that grow companies.

It will take all of us, public organizations, private individuals and institutions, as well as nonprofits, to target our resources and talents, for a growing local economy.

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Communicating with citizens in electronic age

By PAUL HAHN and CASEY HATCHER

Today more than ever citizens expect transparent and timely responses from their local governments for services and information. Communication technology has put citizens in the driver's seat and allowed them to set the stage for how communication should flow between individuals and local government agencies.

Current technology has left many local governments asking themselves, "How can we communicate better with the public?" Butte County is addressing this question in 2013 with the implementation of the county's Communication Plan — a look at enhancing communication with the media, citizens and employees.

Butte County recognized the need for a comprehensive, countywide communication plan to provide direction for how the county communicates with employees, citizens and the media. In 2011, a countywide communication strategy work team was established to spearhead this endeavor, make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors, and ultimately implement the plan.

The team developed the Communication Plan and brought it to the Supervisors for adoption on April 25, 2012. The plan will be updated periodically to incorporate additional goals and action items to support the county's communication efforts.

Four main areas are addressed in the plan: media relations,

Paul Hahn is Butte County's chief administrator; Casey Hatcher is deputy Butte County administrator.

relations.

The work team has begun implementation of several of the action items in the plan and will continue implementation of the remaining items throughout 2013.

A transparent relationship between the local media and Butte County is a key step to citizens receiving accurate, reliable information about services and actions. Butte County solicited input from local media about how to better communicate County information.

In response to the discussion with local media, a news room was added to the county website to provide the media with a central location for press releases, media contacts for each Department, interactive County maps, and public protection resources.

In 2012, the world watched as the use of social media grew exponentially as a communication tool across the world. Local governments now have an opportunity to communicate with the public through social media tools, such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Butte County understands that it is now time to join the conversation. The plan calls for a social media presence for Butte County. The County started into social media with a Twitter account, @countyofbutte. The Twitter account provides information about many county services including items before the Board of Supervisors, open jobs with the county or local flu vaccine clinics.

Additionally, the Butte County Sheriff and the library have their own Twitter and Facebook accounts so citizens can stay connected. For example, visit the library's Facebook page to stay connected with local library events.

Stay connected with Butte County:

- Follow Butte County on Twitter @countyofbutte
- Follow the Butte County Sheriff on Twitter @bcso_news
- Like the Butte County Sheriff on Facebook
- Like the Butte County Library on Facebook

The plan also addresses enhancements to the county's web presence at www.buttecounty.net. The work team is focused on providing a website that allows users to quickly and easily

■ See PLAN, 23



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PLAN: Better methods of communication

From 22

access county services and information. The new website, coming later in 2013, will provide a consistent, professional design and structure across the entire site.

The county will also concentrate on providing information and services electronically whenever possible so the public can access services when it is convenient for them instead of only during office hours.

This enhancement already includes access to both live and archived supervisors hearings so that the public can better see and hear our democratic process.

Lastly, the plan will allow better communication among county employees. As the face and voice of Butte County, employees need to know what is happening and why, so they are informed and included in county services and actions. Including employees fosters a greater sense of ownership and commitment to the county's mission.

In 2013, the work team will continue to implement several action items to reach the goal of better communication with employees.



Bill Husa/Staff File Photo

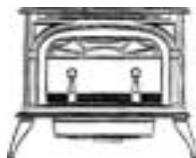
Butte County sheriff's vehicles are seen in Oroville in this photo taken on Aug. 28, 2009. The Butte County Sheriff's Office has its own Twitter (Twitter@bcso_news) and Facebook accounts so citizens can stay connected.

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Bidwell Bar Day

Mikayla Baker gets a lesson in gold panning from Klaus Kuuka during Bidwell Bar Day at the Bidwell Canyon Recreation Area on Lake Oroville on May 1, 2010. One tiny gold flake turned up in the pan during the process. Bidwell Bar Day kicks off Feather Fiesta Days in Oroville during the first week in May. This year, the annual celebration of California's gold rush will be from noon to 4 p.m. on Saturday, May 4.

Steve Schoonover
Staff File Photo



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Sample of the bounty

At the Luceddies Lunch and Dinner House booth, Lauri Clark of Oroville gets a couple of tri-tip plates from cook Mike Kelley and owner Eddie Abiles during Bounty of Oroville in Sank Park on Sept. 25, 2011.

Ty Barbour
Staff File Photo

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Changing education landscape envisioned

By TIM TAYLOR

There are historic changes and new initiatives on the horizon for schools in Butte County and all throughout California. Classroom instruction, school finance, education technology and science-technology-engineering- mathematics (STEM) are four exciting pre-kindergarten- through 12th-grade initiatives that provide some great optimism from educators to help our students prepare for college and careers.

Classroom instruction and state assessments

Currently K-12 classroom instruction and state assessments are not aligned, are outdated, and frustrate many educators, parents and students.

By 2014-15 the new Common Core State Standards are coming to a school near you — and to our state and nation. The standards were developed in collaboration with teachers, school administrators and experts to address our need to educate students who are college-, career- and workplace-ready to participate in a fiercely competitive world economy.

The Common Core State Standards — www.corestandards.org — will provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them.

The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers.

With our students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy.

California, along with 23 other states, has also committed to participating in an assessment designed to test our students' knowledge of these standards. The new tests were created by the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) — www.smarterbalanced.org.

The main purpose of the SBAC was to design a comprehensive and innovative assessment system that is aligned to the Common Core Standards and promotes all students being college- and career-ready upon graduation.

Testing will be computerized, and the assessments will go beyond multiple-choice questions to include extended response and technology-enhanced items, as well as performance tasks that allow students to demonstrate critical-thinking and problem-solving skills.

Students will be state tested far less frequently than we currently do today and only in math and English for the first few years.

We will finally be able to compare test results nationally as the test is aligned to other states.

School funding

Education funding has experienced one of the most difficult periods in Butte County history over the last five years.

The governor's 2013-14 budget proposal reflects an improved economic outlook. This includes the most dramatic change to how education is funded since Proposition 13 was passed in 1978.

The governor's current plan, called the "Local Control

Tim Taylor is the superintendent of Butte County Office of Education. He has worked in education for 25 years as a teacher and administrator. He is a graduate of Chico State University with a BA in Business Marketing.



Taylor

Funding Formula," eliminates the restrictions placed on education funding for specific programs called "categorical" and allows the funding to be used for any educational purpose.

Programs such as Regional Occupational Programs, arts education, adult education, Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment and 30 other categorical programs will be eliminated and moved into apportionment funding over a seven-year period.

If approved by the Legislature, Butte County school districts will set funding priorities and develop a district plan that will improve student achievement as revenue limits will significantly increase over the next seven years.

This proposal has gaps and is not equitable for some districts in our county. However, it does begin to eliminate wasted resources that the state requires and gets more money into the classroom.

Technology

By the end of the decade, our schools will not be using textbooks in the classroom but will be utilizing technology to provide instruction and classroom materials.

Students will eventually be using individual digital devices to communicate to classroom teachers and to each other while they learn.

There are already more than 50,000 students in California taking online courses for high school credit. I encourage parents to take a look at the blueprint for technology at the following website — www.cde.ca.gov/nr/ne/yr12/yr12rel75.asp — to see technology will continue to change the face of education.

Science Technology Engineering Arts and Mathematics

STEAM is a statewide initiative to increase the number of students who will be prepared to work in these fields.

Schools all throughout the county are using robotics, graphic design, engineering and computer technology as hands-on, relevant instructional methodology for student learning. Students are competing in LEGO and Robotic competitions at the regional and state level.

From elementary to high school levels STEAM instruction is great way to motivate students to learn and have fun — www.cde.ca.gov/pd/ca/sc/stemintrod.asp.

The upcoming year will be a reprieve from the draconian cuts schools faced in recent times. School leaders will be working together to communicate these upcoming changes to the community.

Keep supporting our schools so we can implement these and other exciting changes!

Growing innovative regional markets for farmers, buyers and consumers

By NOELLE FERDON

Living in the north valley provides us with an abundance of food choices. Our uniquely diverse cropping systems allow us to enjoy fruits, vegetables, nuts, cheese, meat, rice and even eggs produced by nearly 5,000 hard-working farmers and ranchers in Butte, Glenn and Tehama counties.

It may come as a surprise to the eaters in our tri-county region that about half of the region's farms are just 50 acres or less. As numerous as they are, small and medium-sized farms often have limited choices in how to move their products into both the mainstream and local food marketplace at a price sufficient to maintain their long-term economic viability. The many challenges they face include insufficient capital, smaller production levels and lack of infrastructure.



Bill Husa/Staff File Photo

Fresh produce is seen at a farmers market in Chico on Nov. 14, 2012.

Enter The North Valley Food Hub project. Food hubs can provide local growers a variety of services geared at making locally and regionally grown food more available to mainstream markets, including aggregation, marketing, light processing, distribution and rentable cold-storage.

Grocery retailers and restaurants would benefit as well as distributors, hospitals, hotels, schools and other institutional

■ See HUB, 28



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Truckloads of people tour the rice fields at the Rice Experiment Station in Biggs during a centennial celebration and rice field day on Aug. 29, 2012.

Farmers and ranchers in Butte, Glenn and Tehama counties offer an abundance of food choices for north valley residents, including fruits, vegetables, nuts, cheese, meat, rice and eggs.

Ty Barbour
Staff File Photo



HUB: Mainstream markets

From 27

buyers because the site would be a one-stop shop for locally grown foods ... and the aggregation would help the smaller farmers compete with the scale requirements of larger buyers.

A food hub network in the tri-county has the potential to significantly increase market opportunities for small and medium-sized farmers.

Fortunately, our region will soon benefit from an exciting venture brewing in 2013 that is the first step toward turning the vision of a food hub into a reality. The Northern California Regional Land Trust's recent receipt of a USDA Farmers' Market Promotion Program grant has provided funding to support the first phase of research and development

of a food hub in our region.

When the idea of a food hub first sprouted, the big vision was a full-scale food hub servicing the tri-county region. But recent findings in a study evaluating the viability of a North Valley Food Hub indicated that the smarter way to start is small, and to expand the project in phases building more slowly toward the big vision. So, with the grant funds in hand, we're doing just that.

We are currently developing an online food hub tool that will provide the electronic purchasing infrastructure essential to connecting local farmers, buyers and consumers, while also helping to accommodate the increased market demand we are seeing for sales and distribution of local food.

The demand for local food is here. We

Noelle Ferdon has lived in Chico for 14 years and has worked as director of local food systems with the Land Trust for the last several years. Ferdon is passionate about agriculture, developing local food systems and aims to help create unique and innovative market opportunities that bring sustained profitability to our region's farms.

have a wealth of productive, diverse farms that need more opportunities to sustain profitability.

In January of 2014, the online Food Hub will launch what we believe is the first step toward a sustained network that will expand and create market opportunities for small and mid-sized growers in the region, create new jobs and new revenue for a number of family farm businesses in the area.

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