



CITY NOTES

February 20, 2014

The following information is provided to keep folks apprised of the many ways in which our City government is working to strengthen our community.

- 1. College of the Redwoods.** After attending the College of the Redwoods Board of Trustees meeting on Monday, I was reminded of our community's remarkable level of civic engagement. If there ever was a doubt that our community values education, the hundreds of residents who attended Monday's meeting dispelled it. Fort Bragg's schools offer a solid education for our youth. For many years, our local campus of College of the Redwoods has provided students an immediate opportunity to pursue higher education, offering classes in conjunction with the high school, serving as a springboard to a four-year degree, and offering continuing education and enrichment classes. In recent years, College of the Redwoods has struggled with administrative and financial challenges. Our local campus has borne the brunt of those struggles. The College is at a transition point, giving us the opportunity to define a solution that will serve the needs of our community into the future. Towards that end, Mayor Dave Turner, Fort Bragg Unified School District Board of Trustees President Jennifer Owen, and Noyo Center Executive Director Sheila Semans met with representatives of Mendocino College last week to discuss the possibility of Mendocino College taking over operation of our local community college campus. It's a conversation that is just beginning.
- 2. Noyo Center for Marine Science.** The Noyo Center project was inspired by the community's interest in having an ocean-oriented educational and research institution as a centerpiece of the redevelopment of the former GP mill site property. After years of planning and the acquisition of an 11-acre parcel for the Noyo Center, last year the City Council made a two-year financial commitment to getting the Noyo Center up and running and "spun off" from the City as an independent non-profit entity. The City recently was notified that the Center will receive a \$35,000 "Whales Tail" grant from the California Coastal Commission for the Noyo Center. This will supplement the \$32,000 Noyo Center grant that the State Coastal Conservancy awarded the City last fall. Noyo Center Executive Director Sheila Semans is busy on a number of fronts. She is overseeing preparation of the Noyo Center logo and marketing package, and development of a Noyo Center website that will launch next month. She is working with whale skeleton experts from the University of British Columbia to determine the next steps in cleaning the Blue Whale bones and preparing them for articulation. She is coordinating with the design team that prepared the conceptual plans for the Noyo Center, and laying the groundwork for the next phase of design and engineering of the facility. She is working with two local volunteers with expertise in real estate deals and fundraising to assemble a business plan for the Noyo Center. The need to establish the Noyo Center non-profit has become somewhat of a priority, as it is a necessary precursor to a major fundraising campaign. And on top of all that, Sheila is putting together a small Science Fair for local students which will be held in conjunction with this year's Whale Festival events in Fort Bragg. There are a lot of moving pieces, and it is clear that the Noyo Center for Marine Science is moving forward at a steady clip.

3. **Mendocino Coast District Hospital City Council Ad Hoc Committee.** In January, Mayor Turner appointed Councilmembers Meg Courtney and Doug Hammerstrom to serve as an ad hoc committee to track what's going on at Mendocino Coast District Hospital (MCDH). Committee members met with MCDH CEO Wayne Allen and received assurances that our hospital is doing just fine. Mr. Allen has been invited to provide an update on the MCDH to the full Council at an upcoming meeting.
4. **Tourism and Promotion.** The Fort Bragg Promotion Committee gave a mid-year progress report to the City's Finance & Administration Committee last week. The Committee's primary objective is "to stimulate the economy of Fort Bragg." Towards that end, it has implemented a web- and social media-based tourism marketing campaign and worked to enhance the FortBragg.com website. It has also provided support for special events that can help to generate sales and transient occupancy tax revenue for local businesses. The Promotion Committee floated the concept of hiring a special events coordinator to focus on Fort Bragg events. The Finance & Administration Committee had lots of questions and suggestions for the Promotion Committee to consider as it prepares its budget for the next fiscal year. The Promotion Committee is supported by an annual allocation of a portion of the City's transient occupancy tax (i.e., lodging) revenues.
5. **City Finances.** Next week, the City Council will receive a report from the City's auditors on the FY 2012-13 financial statements. A special meeting with the Mendocino Coast Recreation & Park District (MCRPD) Board will be held on Monday at 3:00 p.m. to review the audit for the C.V. Starr Community Center. At its regular meeting at 6:00 p.m., the Council will receive a report on the City's FY 2012-13 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. Then on Wednesday, the City Council and MCRPD Board will have a joint meeting at 3:00 p.m. to receive a mid-year budget report on the C.V. Starr Center, which will be followed by a special Council meeting to conduct the City's mid-year budget review workshop. In a nutshell, no surprises are expected. The City's operations remain financially sound.

City Notes is published on the first and third Thursday of each month. If you have questions or suggestions regarding the column, feel free to contact City Manager Linda Ruffing at (707) 961-2823, ext. 118 or L.Ruffing@fortbragg.com.