



CITY NOTES

April 3, 2014

1. A Special Thanks to Law Enforcement. Tragic and heroic events marked the response of our local law enforcement agencies to the threat posed by an armed madman on a rampage that began in Eugene, Oregon and ended in Cleone. The death of Mendocino County Sheriff's Deputy Ricky Del Fiorentino was brutal and senseless- a stark reminder of the dangers that law enforcement officers face while protecting our communities. Deputy Del Fiorentino's death was heartbreaking, not only for his family, friends, and colleagues, but also for folks who first heard or read of his goodness in his eulogies.

Deputy Del Fiorentino made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty, and we owe him an enormous debt of gratitude. His valiant actions together with those of Fort Bragg Police Lieutenant John Naulty, Fort Bragg Police Chief Scott Mayberry, and Mendocino County Sheriff's Lieutenant Greg Stefani, likely saved the lives of countless others who may have crossed paths with the heavily armed and violent assassin. While many officers were involved in the response, Deputy Del Fiorentino, Lieutenant Naulty, Chief Mayberry and Lieutenant Stefani each had direct contact with the suspect and all put their lives on the line. We are fortunate to have such brave and dedicated law enforcement officers protecting our community.

The response from our local law enforcement partners, both during and after the event was phenomenal. Mutual aid assistance poured into Fort Bragg from dozens of local and State agencies from the moment the first call for help was dispatched. The support continued in the event's aftermath, as demonstrated by the presence of hundreds of officers from far and wide at last week's memorial service. Words cannot fully express how much this support has meant to the Fort Bragg Police Department and the City of Fort Bragg.

2. The Healing Process. The death of Deputy Del Fiorentino has had a deep emotional impact on our Police Department. Ricky was known to everyone in the Department and was a close friend of many. His death was a very, very sad event. The fact that he died in the line of duty has taken its toll on employees and their families. It is a tragic reminder of the mortal dangers inherent in the job of each and every law enforcement officer. Two days after the event, the Department held a meeting for all employees and their immediate families called a "Critical Incident Stress Debriefing." The meeting was facilitated by trained chaplains and gave everyone an opportunity to talk through the raw emotions that arise in an event such as this. Chief Mayberry has done a tremendous job in supporting his team as they carry on, while working to recover from the senseless death of their friend and colleague, Deputy Ricky Del Fiorentino.

3. A Special "Shout Out" to Some Others. Mendocino County Sheriff Tom Allman once again demonstrated his exemplary leadership talents and the depth of his compassion, as he helped guide his grieving Sheriff's Office and as he responded to the community following the incident. The Mendocino Coast District Hospital chaplains have provided ongoing support to our Police Department and others- their services are much appreciated. The Fort Bragg Unified School District Board of Trustees, administrators, teachers and students are to be commended for their support and flexibility in accommodating Deputy Del Fiorentino's memorial service at Cotton Auditorium and the Fort Bragg Middle School gym- an event that required the cancellation of a day of classes. The Redwood Coast Senior Center also closed that day and deserves thanks. Police Chief Chris Dewey at the Ukiah Police Department sent over a team of officers last Wednesday to provide coverage in Fort Bragg, thus allowing the entire Fort Bragg Police Department to attend the memorial service. These are just a few of the individuals and agencies deserving our thanks. It is times like these past couple of weeks that remind us of how lucky we are to live in a small, tightly-knit community where people and agencies will work together and support one another, without hesitation, in times of need.

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 LRuffing@fortbragg.com.