



# COUNTY CURRENTS

Santa Cruz County

www.santacruzcounty.us

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A publication of the County Administrative Office Carlos J. Palacios, County Administrator



## WITH BUDGET ADOPTED, CHALLENGES REMAIN

**I**n late June, the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors approved a \$777 million County Budget that continues responsible stewardship of public funds while delivering high-quality services residents have come to expect.

The 2018-19 County Budget continues reductions in long-term pension obligations and improves fiscal reserves, while implementing new health care and mental health services, early childhood education programs, homeless services coordination and continued storm recovery. The budget also sets aside funding to address deferred maintenance within the county, including facilities and technology infrastructure.

"By making prudent choices, the Board



The Board of Supervisors deliberates on the 2018-19 Budget.

set County government on a course that has allowed us to maintain County programs and services at a time when other local governments are curtailing them," Board of Supervisors Chair Zach Friend said. "However, we learned during annual budget hearings that there is more work to be done, and we look forward to working with the community on ways to address those needs."

During budget hearings, several departments raised critical unmet needs in the areas of homelessness, mental health services and neighborhood-serving facilities, including parks. Funding for year-round homeless shelters, increased mental health services and funding for improvements to Simpkins Swim Center and several parks -- including LEO's

Haven at Chanticleer Park, which would be the County's first all-inclusive playground -- have not been identified.

The Board directed County Administrative Officer Carlos Palacios to return August 7 with recommendations for addressing critical unmet needs.

For information on the budget and help navigating budget data, [click here](#).

**Monterey Bay Community Power** residential service began July 1. County Supervisor **Bruce McPherson** led the charge to establish a locally owned energy utility to serve the Monterey Bay, which now provides power for residents and businesses such as the Monterey Bay Aquarium.



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Star Luna's name was drawn in the lottery for Aptos Village affordable housing.

## For some, a chance to fulfill American dream

On June 1, dozens of hopefuls gathered at Rio Sands Motel for a drawing that would determine whether they would be eligible to buy a below-market apartment home in one of the least affordable housing markets in the U.S.

Under the County's inclusionary housing rules, five units (and eventually 10) will be available in the Aptos Village project, with one-, two- and three-bedroom homes beginning at around \$300,000 for income-qualified families.

One of the names that came up was Star Luna, a single mother of two with children already in Aptos elementary schools. A human resource manager, Luna said buying a home has been a life-long dream..

More affordable housing is desperately needed across Santa Cruz County. Firefighters, teachers and others who work to make Santa Cruz County a wonderful place to live deserve to share in that bounty. Congratulations, Star. We're very happy for you!

Watch [a video of Luna's reaction](#).

## Operate a hosted rental?

Through Sept. 17, operators of existing short-term [hosted rental](#) businesses may apply for a license to comply with a new County ordinance. After that date, registrations in the unincorporated area will be limited to no more than 250. If you supplement income by renting out a room, register today to assure you get a license.

# CELEBRATE PARKS!

## FREE EVENTS THROUGHOUT JULY FOR PARKS AND REC MONTH

July is National Parks and Recreation Month, and the Santa Cruz County Department of Parks, Open Spaces and Cultural Ser-

vices invites you to come out and play with us! Free events are planned throughout the month.

The fun gets started July 4 with a free community swim day at Simpkins Family Swim Center; check [www.scparks.com](http://www.scparks.com) for hours.

On July 6 from 5-9 p.m., grab the whole family and come play with us in the street at Friday Night Recess. Cooper Street near the Museum of Art and History will be closed and turned into a giant playground, with dodgeball, hopscotch, tetherball, cornhole and more, as well as a live DJ.

Free outdoor movies will be playing July 13 at Highlands Park ("Brave"), July 15 at Aptos Village Park ("Wrinkle in Time") and July 19 at Heart of Soquel (Despicable Me 3").

Our partners at the Bear Creek Recreation Center in Boulder Creek are hosting free community days for all ages on July 11, 18, and 25, and would love for you to come take a dip in the pool.



Friday Night Recess returns to the Museum of Art and History July 6.

On July 14, come observe an all-ages Xilonen rites of Passage Ceremony at Pinto Lake County Park, led by the Ixtatutli/White Hawk Indian Council. This coming of age ritual dates back thousands of years.

**MORE INFO:**  
[www.scparks.com](http://www.scparks.com)

On July 28, County Parks and several partners will be holding an EPIC Family Fun Day at Simpkins and Shoreline Middle School. Obstacles courses, oversized board games, a pop-up playground, food truck and a beer/wine garden are all available.

Lastly, don't forget to mark your calendars for Parks & Rex, the dog- and family-friendly shindig at Simpkins, which returns Aug. 25.

Birding, stretch classes, a walking tour of Heart of Soquel Park, and more are also available. A full schedule of activities [is available here](#).



Looking for something to do? Whether you're 8 or 85, the '18-'19 Parks Department's Activity Guide is a great place to start. [Check it out!](#)



## Cannabis licensing officially underway

Building on years of community input, the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors in April approved a set of regulations allowing for the cultivation and manufacture of cannabis and cannabis products in Santa Cruz County.

Applications are now being processed in the County's [Cannabis Licensing Office](#). The rules — which are pending Coastal Commission approval in coastal areas — protect public safety and include strict land use requirements, subjecting growers for the first time to licensing requirements and conformance with relevant state and local laws, including environmental, building, pesticide and other regulations.

The ordinances allow for indoor cultivation operations in commercial areas, as well as outdoor grows on large agricultural and rural lots, provided an applicant meets certain criteria. Dangerous practices such as neighborhood "whole-house" grows are prohibited, while practices such as solvent-based extraction methods are strictly regulated.

Individual applications will receive site-specific environmental review, be required to comply with CEQA and must include any appropriate mitigation measures identified through the EIR process.

### Citizen Connect



We've always updating our award-winning Citizen Connect app to give you access to anytime, anywhere services. [Download Citizen Connect](#) for iTunes and Google Play.



# Board approves County's first-ever Strategic Plan

County Administrative Officer Carlos Palacios is pleased to announce the release of the County's first-ever Strategic Plan.

Based on input from thousands of residents and County employees during the "Vision Santa Cruz County" Process, the Strategic Plan was approved by the Board June 26, and will be used as a blueprint to guide County operations and resources for the next six years.

The Strategic Plan includes a Vision, Mission and set of values, along with specific focus areas and goals. The focus areas include: Comprehensive Health & Safety, Attainable Housing, Reliable Transportation, Sustainable Environment, Dynamic Economy and County Operational Excellence.

"Strategic planning was one of my first initiatives, and I'm pleased to see the community's vision expressed in this plan. We know there are challenges ahead as we improve County operations and the quality of life for all Santa Cruz County residents. We expect this document will serve as a guide as we rise to meet those challenges," Palacios said.

Within each focus are a set of four goals. For example, the community's

top priority was the high cost of housing in Santa Cruz County. The four goals in "Attainable Housing" are: Partner to develop affordable housing, lower barriers to housing solutions, and access new funding sources; Sustain and rejuvenate communities by integrating places to live, work and play; Increase and diversify housing options through smart growth programs, adaptive reuse and innovation; and Expand services to reduce homelessness and increase housing stability.

These goals will be used to create an action plan and performance measurements. They will be embedded into everything the County does, including Board of Supervisors agendas and the County Budget process.

Public input in this process mattered. Through community meetings, online surveys, emails, phone calls and more, thousands helped shape the County's Strategic Plan. It represents the highest ideals of the community, and everyone who participated helped make the plan better, more complete and more reflective of the community's needs.

To download a copy of the Strategic Plan, please visit:

[www.santacruzcounty.us/sp](http://www.santacruzcounty.us/sp)



Looking for employment?  
[www.santacruzcountyjobs.com](http://www.santacruzcountyjobs.com)



# New Rountree facility focuses on inmate rehabilitation, reentry

Santa Cruz County Sheriff Jim Hart is not like other sheriffs across California. While presiding over declining crime rates in Santa Cruz County, he has been a leading voice for policies that protect the people of Santa Cruz County by embracing diversity and reducing recidivism.

Hart was the first sheriff in California to endorse SB 54, the so-called "Sanctuary State" bill. Solving crime takes cooperation from all sectors of the community including undocumented immigrants, and Hart wants to make sure all victims come forward regardless of immigration status.

In May, the County opened the new Rountree Detention Facility. The \$25 million project re-visions a dilapidated medium-security jail, adding space for a variety of educational and vocational program areas, interview and counseling rooms, classrooms, indoor recreational areas, and improved areas for visitors.

The Rehabilitation and Re-Entry facility is part of a tiered incarceration plan for inmates who have demonstrated their commitment to changing their lives.

"We believe strongly that preparing incarcerated persons for release not only decreases the likelihood they may reoffend but will help them become more productive members of our community," Hart said.

*For more on the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office, go to [www.scsheriff.com](http://www.scsheriff.com).*



*The new Rountree Facility was dedicated in May, adding beds and providing ample space for offender rehabilitation.*

## ***Grey Bears, County make first shipment of recycled polystyrene***

For a decade, Santa Cruz County has worked to eradicate polystyrene (also known as Styrofoam) from the environment. Those efforts took a leap forward recently with the County's first shipment of recycled polystyrene.

By prohibiting polystyrene food service containers and banning the sale of all polystyrene products (the first in the U.S.

to do so) we've made an instant improvement to coastal environments and other natural areas. Working with Grey Bears, we've now begun recycling the polystyrene we can't otherwise capture, shipping 10 tons of densified polystyrene off for reuse. "This service is another reflection of our community's priorities in environmental protection," Santa Cruz County Board Chair Zach Friend said.



# Grants help address youth homelessness

Through a \$2.2 million Housing and Urban Development grant, the County of Santa Cruz is pleased to announce that the Homeless Action Partnership and Youth Advisory Board have approved funding for seven projects to address local youth and young adult homelessness.

According to the 2017 Point-in-Time Count, there are 588 homeless unaccompanied minors and youth age 18-24 in Santa Cruz County. Eighty-seven percent of homeless youth were living in Santa Cruz County at the time they became homeless, but are unable to find housing in Santa Cruz County's housing market.

In January 2017, Santa Cruz County became one of 10 communities nationwide to receive a Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The final list of YHDP grants is the result of more than a year of community-based planning to design innovative projects to address the needs of homeless local youth and young adults and further the goals of All In - The Santa Cruz County Community Strategic Plan to Prevent, Reduce, and Eventually End Homelessness.

"The approval of these projects represents a significant milestone for addressing the significantly unmet needs of homeless youth in our community. With implementation beginning in October, we will be able provide our youth

with critically-needed services and housing programs. The YHDP was designed by HUD with youth voice at its core, and I'm humbled by the dedication and hard work by the young adults on the Youth Advisory Board," Santa Cruz County Homeless Services Coordinator Rayne Marr said.

Together, community stakeholders and the Youth Advisory Board created the YHDP Coordinated Community Plan, which identifies service gaps and critical projects that could both break new ground and build upon past successes.

Two-year funding awards include \$576,000 for a local youth and young adult drop-in center with a wide range of supportive services for those aged 15-24. Though similar models have proven successful in other communities, no similar resource currently exists in Santa Cruz County. To be operated by Encompass Community Services, the drop-in center is expected to serve 35-50 youth per day, and up to 450 over two years.

A \$200,000 grant will help fund an innovative program housing youth and young adults with local families, prioritizing pregnant/parenting youth, LGBTQ youth and youth from communities of color. Serving 14 youth over two years, the "Santa Cruz County Host Homes Program" will be operated by the Santa Clara-based Bill Wilson Center, which serves thousands of South Bay clients annually.

Rapid rehousing is an important feature of the program, with \$700,000 to provide rent, move-in assistance and housing navigation for homeless youth with independent living experience. Serving approximately 50 youth over two years, the grants will be split equally between the Homeless Services Center and Families in Transition of Santa Cruz County.

A \$275,000 grant will fund "New Roots," a permanent supportive housing program for youths with disabilities and complex needs. A \$150,000 grant will fund a Youth Homelessness Response Team, a joint project of the Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County and the County Office of Education with a focus of preventing homelessness for unaccompanied youth up age 24. A \$150,000 grant will fund youth-specific elements of the Smart Path Coordinated Entry System, serving approximately 600 youth over two years.

Projects are subject to final review by HUD, with approved funds likely to be released in October. In addition to the Youth Advisory Board, the County wishes to thank the Homeless Action Partnership, Encompass Community Services, serving as lead community agency for YHDP, and the over 40 members of youth serving community groups and agencies for their hours of planning work and leadership in the creation of the YHDP Coordinated Community Plan.

## *New Felton Library and Nature Park takes shape with grants, bids*

The new Felton Library and Nature Park got good news recently with an additional \$1 million state grant thanks to Assemblymember Mark Stone, and another \$395,000 grant from State Parks. [Construction bids on the project](#) are due July 26.

Pairing outdoor education with modern library services, the project would replace an aging and historic structure that would be preserved for other uses.

Primary funding for the new library project is from Measure S, the voter approved library parcel tax.

The project will include an outdoor learning space, interactive nature discovery zones, and an interpretive nature loop trail. County partners include [Felton Library Friends](#), the Santa Cruz Public Library, the County Department of Public Works, and the San Lorenzo Valley Water District.



## Meet Your Supervisor

### [John Leopold](#)

District 1 includes Live Oak, Summit Road, Soquel and parts of Capitola and Santa Cruz.



### [Zach Friend](#)

District 2 includes Aptos, Corralitos, part of Capitola and the South County coast.



### [Ryan Coonerty](#)

District 3 includes much of Santa Cruz and the North Coast.



### [Greg Caput](#)

District 4 includes most of Watsonville and the Pajaro Valley.



### [Bruce McPherson](#)

District 5 includes the San Lorenzo Valley, Scotts Valley and parts of Santa Cruz.



Click on each supervisor to learn more about them and their responsibilities, including how to reach them during constituent office hours.



## SB1 at work on local roads

In Santa Cruz County, the local share of \$5 billion in annual statewide funds for roads available through SB1, the Road Repair and Accountability Act, are helping rebuild our transportation system following the winter storms of 2017.

What do these funds do? With a price tag for storm repairs in excess of \$120 million and federal requirements that local governments match a portion of the cost, they are rebuilding our roads while protecting critical services elsewhere in the community. Without SB1, the road to recovery would be much longer, and would have imperiled other County projects and programs.

Due in major part to SB1, several priority road repair projects have already been

completed, including Valencia Road, Soquel-San Jose Road, Glenwood Drive, Soquel Drive in Aptos Village and more. The map above shows the location of all SB1 projects in the coming fiscal year. There is likely one in your neighborhood.

SB1 will provide \$115 million to Santa Cruz County's local governments, including the County and all four cities, over the next 10 years. In addition to those funds, additional grants would be available for road and alternative transportation projects, such as a recent \$476,000 grant to help repair Granite Creek Road and Branciforte Drive.

A repeal of SB1, which derives funding partly through gas taxes, will be on the November ballot.

## Quick Guide

Citizens rely on county government for many needed services. Use this handy guide to find who to call, or come find us on the web at: [www.santacruzcounty.us](http://www.santacruzcounty.us).

**Main Number**  
(831) 454-2000

**Board of Supervisors**  
(831) 454-2200

**Agricultural Commissioner**  
(831) 763-8080

**Animal Services**  
(831) 454-7303

**Assessor's Office**  
(831) 454-2002

**Benefits**  
(888) 421-8080

**County Clerk/Elections**  
(831) 454-2060

**Economic Development**  
(831) 454-2728

**Environmental Health**  
(831) 454-2022

**Health Services Agency**  
(831) 454-4800

**Parks and Recreation**  
(831) 454-7900

**Planning Department**  
(831) 454-2580

**Public Works**  
(831) 454-2160

**Recycling Information**  
(831) 454-2333

**Sheriff/Coroner**  
(831) 471-1121  
(call 911 if emergency)

**Superior Court**  
(831) 763-8060

**Tax Collections**  
(831) 454-2510