



# COUNTY CURRENTS

Santa Cruz County

www.santacruzcounty.us

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## A YEAR LATER, PROGRESS MADE

**F**riday, March 16 marked the one-year anniversary of a federal disaster declaration for January 2017 storms. So far, we've completed \$20 million in debris removal and road repairs, including several priority projects.



*Glenwood Drive, then and now*

"By adopting repair guidelines and hiring additional staff to work on obtaining quick project approvals, the Board of Supervisors has prioritized and expedited the storm recovery process," Board Chair Zach Friend said. "We still have a long road ahead of us, but we have come a long way since last winter."

17 winter storms caused more damage to public infrastructure than any storm in history. The Federal Emergency Management Agency eventually declared three major storm disasters for Santa Cruz County, with the Jan. 18-23 storm event impacting major routes across the county.

With approximately \$120 million in damage to more than 200 different sites, the 2016-

Several major repairs have concluded, with both FEMA, the Federal Highway Admin-

istration and SB 1 -- the Road Repair & Accountability Act -- contributing funding. They include Soquel-San Jose Road, Glenwood Drive, Soquel Drive at Aptos Street, and Laurel Glen Road. Valencia Road at Trout Gulch, the County's largest repair project, is nearing completion.

Several smaller routes needed to restore neighborhood access have also been completed, including repairs on Mountain Charlie Road, Canham Road, Skyland Road, Green Valley Road, Jarvis Road, China Grade and more. Other major repairs, including Bear Creek Road and Swanton Road, are underway.

County officials estimate it will take several years to repair all storm-related projects.

**JAMES DEAN A "GIANT" AGAIN:** Brookdale residents have been following the renovation of the historic Brookdale Lodge, with help from the County's Office for Economic Development. After finding a local artist to restore the iconic mural, owner Previn Patel had it installed in March. The restoration was met with acclaim by San Lorenzo Valley residents.



### In This Issue

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- Cannabis Rules Moving Forward
- Monterey Bay Community Power Launches
- 'Connecting the Drops' on Local Water Issues
- DPW Director Retires
- Study Highlights Tech Contributions



## Hundreds seek chance at Aptos affordable housing

With five deed-restricted Measure J units in the Aptos Village project and five more to come, hundreds of local residents attended bilingual meetings to help orient people to [the process of entering a lottery for 1-, 2- or 3-bedroom apartment homes](#). The homes are available to those earning up to 120 percent of area median income.



The start of MBCP was celebrated with the lighting of a ceremonial lantern.

## Monterey Bay Community Power launches

Monterey Bay Community Power, a joint powers agreement between Monterey Bay governments to provide renewable energy to commercial and residential customers over PG&E's existing infrastructure, officially began operations March 1.

The kickoff was held in Monterey's historic City Hall, signaling the beginning of power delivery to commercial customers in Santa Cruz, San Benito and Monterey counties. Residential delivery will follow this summer.

For more about MBCP, go to [www.mbcommunitypower.org](http://www.mbcommunitypower.org). To apply to participate in their citizen advisory council and make a difference, [click here](#).

# Need help buying groceries? Apply for CalFresh

May is CalFresh Awareness Month, a comprehensive effort across Santa Cruz County to increase access and participation in this food assistance program. While many families in our community utilize CalFresh to help put food on the table, creating a healthy start for children and fostering healthy eating habits, many more are eligible.

Studies suggest that household hunger negatively impacts the intellectual, physical, and emotional development of children and puts them at greater risks for obesity, diabetes, and other diseases. Research also indicates the affects of food insecurity follow children into the classroom, often resulting in poor academic performance. Santa Cruz County has implemented various innovative methods to help recipients apply for and maintain benefits to combat these negative impacts.



CalFresh is critical to good nutrition for many families with almost half of recipients being children. This program increases household food budgets, allowing families to put healthy and nutritious food on the table and empowering families to build healthy generations.

### WHO QUALIFIES?

Families with children, single adults, couples, and students, if they meet income and residence requirements.

### HELP YOU CAN COUNT ON

CalFresh benefits can be used to purchase food from participating grocery stores and farmers markets.

Any money left on your EBT card at the end of the month rolls over for use the following month. Be sure to visit the [Human Services Department website](#) for a calendar of events.

## NEED MORE INFO?

Visit us on the web at [www.GetCalFresh.org](http://www.GetCalFresh.org), or call I-888-42I-8080.

You may also visit us at:

- 1020 Emeline Ave. Santa Cruz
- 18 W. Beach St. Watsonville

### COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND CULTURAL SERVICES



### 2018-19 PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

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!](#)

## ***New study highlights local tech economy***

A [new report](#) prepared by Beacon Economics and commissioned by the Santa Cruz County Workforce Development Board and Santa Cruz Works demonstrates the value and potential of Santa Cruz County's burgeoning tech industry.

"The Santa Cruz Tech Sector and Ecosystem" outlines the benefits of the growing local tech sector and busts several myths, including drawing distinctions between tech cultures in Santa Cruz and Silicon Valley. While the number of local tech jobs remains below peak levels achieved prior to the Great Recession, the report shows technology to be a high-paying growth sector, with average wages of \$117,200.

Major local employers include Plantronics, Amazon and Looker. Top tech jobs include software publishers, computer and electronic manufacturing, computer systems design, and technical consulting services.

In addition, the report found that venture capital investment peaked in Santa Cruz County in 2017, with \$192.7 million in deals. The sector helps address Santa Cruz County's affordability crisis, created by local wages failing to keep pace with regional housing costs.

"The report notes how our tech ecosystem differs from those found in Silicon Valley and San Francisco," said Santa Cruz County Workforce Development Board Director Andy Stone. "Our tech industry offers workers a quality of life that cannot be matched anywhere."

**Citizen Connect**



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## **2nd 'Connecting the Drops' seminar discusses local water supply challenges**

On February 1, scores of residents came together to hear from experts and discuss local water resources planning and management.

"Connecting the Drops: Working Together for Water" brought together a variety of voices for a discussion featuring keynote speaker Taryn Ravazzini, Deputy Director of the California Department of Water Resources. It included information stations on groundwater management, stormwater management and aquifer recharge, conservation, planning for water supply, and fish and watershed management.

Water issues have a significant impact on the environment and Santa Cruz County residents, who are among the most frugal water users in the state. Like other coastal aquifers around the U.S., the County's



groundwater basins have historically been pumped in excess of sustainable yield, and local water suppliers are concerns about balancing demand, including human and environmental needs. California's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act means water managers must develop comprehensive groundwater sustainability plans with the goal of achieving sustainable groundwater management within 20 years.

Local governments, water agencies, and community members all have a role in the future of our water resources and watersheds.

Local agencies are looking at a variety of options to improve water management practices and enhance groundwater recharge, which can help protect aquifers from being overdrafted. [Click here for more info.](#)



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





# Working together to find real solutions to local homelessness

*Faced with an issue impacting the entire West Coast and found everywhere from Davenport to Watsonville, Santa Cruz County has hired the first-ever homeless services coordinator, plays a leading role in planning and providing local homelessness services and has helped lead the fight for homes for families, veterans, seniors, victims of domestic violence and others experiencing homelessness. But there is more work to be done.*

Statewide, California's housing crisis has led to a dramatic rise in homelessness, and never have the ties between a lack of affordable housing and homelessness been more clear.

State housing officials estimate the state is 2.5 million to 4 million housing units short of adequate supply, as state permits for housing construction have slowed. At the same time, homelessness has risen sharply, and a quarter of the homeless persons in America now reside in California. In Los Angeles County alone, 58,000 people are homeless — a population nearly equal to that of the city of Santa Cruz.

Locally, the recent San Lorenzo Park benchlands encampment has focused attention on the problem. The County is helping fund the relocated camp, an effort being organized and led by the city of Santa Cruz. The County applauds and supports those efforts.

There is much work to be done in the areas of housing, funding for homeless services, improved services to support

those trying to get off the streets and in coordinating efforts across nonprofits and other local governments.

Over the years, the County built hundreds of [affordable homes](#) and encourages landlords to rent to homeless persons through the All-In Landlord Partnership, which offers landlords willing to rent to homeless persons [rent and property guarantees](#). We are also a majority funder of the winter shelter, and are exploring new housing options for homeless persons.

Despite one of the [lowest levels of federal homelessness funding in the U.S.](#), we also partner with local cities to pay for a range of services, downtown outreach workers in downtown Santa Cruz and mental health liaisons to work with local police departments. We also advocate for more state money to address homelessness. While the funding hasn't arrived yet, those efforts [have begun to pay off with SB2](#) and other state legislation.

In recent years, we have also dramatically expanded drug treatment are

working to [increase inpatient drug and alcohol rehabilitation capacity in the county](#), and we are working to expand mental health services. We have [implemented a \\$20 million Whole Person Care pilot program](#), which will help address the multiple medical and mental health issues faced by many homeless persons. We are also working to reestablish a day services center to help place individuals on a path to stability.

We also work closely with local governments and nonprofits to improve coordination of services to homeless persons, including helping them find housing. We convene the Homeless Action Partnership and helped create the ["All In" Plan](#) to address homelessness.

Homelessness is a complex issue, and solutions touch on many areas, from land use policies to health care to economic opportunity. To read more about our local homeless population, [read the biennial homeless census and survey](#).

# Micro Business Summit returns to Cabrillo

The largest small business event in Santa Cruz County returns Friday, May 4 when hundreds of local business leaders gather to network, share ideas and learn how to grow their businesses.

Returning the Cabrillo College campus in Aptos, the 3rd annual Micro-Business Summit will continue its tradition of speakers and sessions on relevant topics that local small business owners can put to immediate use to grow their business and increase their profile.

"We are extremely excited to bring the Micro-Business Summit back for a third year. We've put together an all-star lineup of experts to share their knowledge with local small businesses, which are the backbone of our economy," said Barbara Mason, Santa Cruz County Economic Development Coordi-

nator.

Tickets for the "82% Micro-Business Summit" are on sale now. For \$49, participants will be able to choose from a range of more than 40 dynamic speakers, with breakout seminars on cryptocurrency, marketing, managing cash flow, advertising, social media and more. The event includes an afternoon mixer and complimentary breakfast and lunch. Enrollment is limited to 300 participants.

Registration is available at [www.microbusinesssummit.com](http://www.microbusinesssummit.com). Follow the event on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/82percent](https://www.facebook.com/82percent). Eighty-two percent of local business are classified as small, and changes in the economy are likely to become even



more important to the overall health of the local, state and national economies. The Micro Business Summit is produced by the Santa Cruz County Office for Economic Development, Santa Cruz County Small Business Development Center, Slingshot SV, The Root Group, and Andersen Media & Communications.

*HELPING HAND: The Department of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services relies on support from staff and volunteers. Right, Parks Superintendant Eric Sturm repaints a sign at Soquel Lions Park. Below, volunteers from the Regional Fire Academy work on upgrades to Anna Jean Cummings Park.*

[www.scparks.com](http://www.scparks.com)



## 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.*

## 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



*Cannabis Licensing Manager Robin Bolster-Grant address a crowd in Board chambers on February 1. A Board vote on cannabis rules is likely in April.*

## Decision on cannabis rules near as Board sets April 9 meeting

The Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors has scheduled a 9 a.m. meeting on April 9 to allow the public to give feedback to a revised ordinance allowing the cultivation, distribution and manufacturing of cannabis. A preliminary vote by the Board could come later that month.

The rules are designed to strengthen environmental protections and help facilitate the development of regulated Santa Cruz County cannabis industry in compliance with state law, while protecting neighborhoods. The project builds on a draft Environmental Impact Report that included more than 200 public comments, as well as numerous hearings before the Board of Supervisors. All local operations would be required to comply with local land use, environmental, building, pesticide and

other regulations and best practices.

While the draft EIR would not be certified under this proposal, each application would receive site-specific environmental review and be required to include any appropriate mitigation measures identified through the EIR process. The County believes this updated process provides the surest path to a regulated industry in the shortest possible time frame, while protecting neighborhoods and the environment.

New rules would also allow the County to begin addressing negative impacts from unregulated cannabis operations, including providing revenue for robust enforcement of illegal activities.