

# Calaveras nets one more win, totaling five in MLL

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## Cannabis regulations bring heated debate

Board of Supervisors study new county ordinances, cannabis control department

By DAVIS HARPER

DAVIS@CALAVERASENTERPRISE.COM

The Calaveras County Board of Supervisors began reviewing two ordinances and a fee study pertaining to commercial cannabis cultivation in special meetings on Tuesday and Wednesday. The fee study was to support the formation of a cannabis control department, and the two ordinances were cultivation regulations and an associated background

check ordinance.

San Andreas Fire Protection District Chief Don Young stood at the entrance of board chambers to limit the number of people allowed in the room to the seated section.

Residents held up "Recall Stopper" signs on the right side of the room.

The meeting began with a presentation from County Administrative Officer Al Alt on the fee study for a proposed cannabis control department.

Housed under the county administrative office, the department would expeditiously facilitate background checks, process applications, and help inspect grow sites. It would serve as the location for prospective growers to file applications, and its staff would help guide individuals

through the application process.

Under the fee study, cultivation permits would cost \$12,561.78 with annual renewal fees of \$2,606.75, a background check fee of \$153 and an appeal fee of \$947. That's based on the assumption that the county will process 152 applications for permits (or 80% of 190 formerly registered growers that were in compliance with the county that are likely to apply), Alt said.

He stressed the importance of the department as providing "fiscal oversight and transparency," adding that revenues and expenditures for the regulatory program could be regularly presented to board members and disseminated to the public.

District 1 Supervisor Gary Tofanelli see **Cannabis**, A8

## Inmate hunger strike canceled after complaints of 'price gouging' resolved

By DAKOTA MORLAN

DAKOTA@CALAVERASENTERPRISE.COM

Seventeen inmates have canceled their plans to hunger strike in protest of "outrageous" phone and commissary prices at the Calaveras County Jail after the facility's administration promised negotiations with their private vendors.

"Everything is being resolved peacefully without having to starve ourselves or go to extremes," inmate Marc Holocker told the Enterprise on Tuesday. "I am glad that this is happening."

According to Holocker, a response to the inmates' filed grievance was received via mail on Sept. 26, the same day the group intended to begin its hunger strike. Holocker said the inmates did not find the administration's response satisfactory and submitted a follow up, and a second response was received verbally on Tuesday, promising efforts to lower prices at the jail through negotiations with the facility's private vendors.

Calaveras County Jail Bureau Commander Capt. Chris Hewitt told the Enterprise on Wednesday that subsequent research regarding the inmates' grievances revealed that commissary items were more expensive at the Calaveras County Jail than in Tuolumne County, though both counties are contracted with Swanson Services Corp.

Swanson has agreed to meet with the jail at an undetermined date, Hewitt said, and separate negotiations are currently in progress with the facility's phone service vendor.

"We are working with them to see what we can do on that part," he said.

Hewitt emphasized that the county and Sheriff's Office do not receive any revenues from canteen sales and phone calls, as profits beyond what the vendor receives are placed into an inmate welfare fund.

Following the hunger strike ultimatum reported last week, the events at the Calaveras County Jail have caught the attention of civil rights advocates who are addressing

similar issues at the state and national levels.

Danica Rodarmel, a San Francisco-based attorney at the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights, said she has been working alongside other advocacy groups to lower the cost of phone calls and commissary prices in county jails and juvenile facilities through statewide legislation.

Senate Bill 555 has garnered bipartisan support and will hopefully be passed in the upcoming legislative year, Rodarmel said.

Some jurisdictions have already elected to reduce or remove prices altogether, she said, with the San Francisco jail system scheduled to phase out phone fees entirely by next year.

Rodarmel said surveys performed by her and her colleagues have revealed that high phone prices burden the families of those incarcerated and exacerbate mental illness and feelings of isolation in inmates.

Additionally, she said, many inmates reported feeling hungry and needing to purchase commissary food items in order to sleep at night.

"The way the system currently operates is shortsighted and cruel," said Rodarmel, who added that there are loopholes in California Penal Code that allow for the allocation of inmate welfare funds outside of their intended use. "I think this is pretty basic stuff. It is disappointing and kind of disheartening that we even have to have this conversation ... Unfortunately, the constitutional floor for rights of incarcerated people is pretty low. It's as if we've forgotten that incarcerated people are human beings."

Rodarmel said that although scenarios similar to that in Calaveras County are unusual, there may be other inmate protests that go unreported. She and her colleagues hope to bolster those inmates by providing relevant information to their cause.

"The reality is, most inmates across the U.S. will be released at some point," Rodarmel said. "We want them to have access (to family) and live with dignity and be well, because we want them to come home well."

## Fall prevention program celebrates successful first year

By DAKOTA MORLAN

DAKOTA@CALAVERASENTERPRISE.COM

Participants observed National Fall Prevention Awareness Day and celebrated one year of Stay Vertical Calaveras with a session of tai chi at Murphys Community Park on Sept. 23.

According to program director Steve Shetzline, Stay Vertical has surpassed all expectations in its first year, growing to encompass 10 different class sites, hosting nearly 500 participants throughout the county. A "top priority" of the Mark Twain Health Care District, the program has already secured funding for next year, with plans to continue its model of offering free strength and balance training to

an aging Mother Lode population.

"The health care district is super supportive, and not just financially," said Shetzline, who organized fall prevention

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## Homecoming celebration for purple & gold



Enterprise photos by Amber Pappé (left) and Dakota Morlan (bottom)

Bret Harte High School celebrates homecoming week on Sept. 23 with a parade, rally, football game and dance. Homecoming Queen Kinlye Apley, left, is escorted by Jaden Bitner. The school's football team, above, storms the field before the big game. Students, below, cheer at the rally on the streets of Angels Camp.



Bret Harte High School rallied for its homecoming game against the Linden Lions with a purple and gold parade down Angels Camp's Main Street on Sept. 23, observing a longstanding tradition of "ribbits" and "croaks" and tearing apart a lion's head pinata.

The Bullfrogs' varsity football team was defeated 43-27, but new head coach Kelly Osborn encapsulated the spirit of the day with a rousing speech prior to the game.

"I want (you) to understand that this is an aggressive game, and hopefully we'll feed on the Lion just like we did on the pinata tonight," Osborn said. "But it's aggressive, and so you've gotta want some, don't you? What do you do when you want some?"

"Get some!" the crowd chanted.

In between games, Bret Harte water polo captain and softball player Kinlye Apley was crowned 2019 Homecoming Queen, escorted by fellow senior athlete Jaden Bitner.

## Local firefighters reflect on Walker Fire

By DAVIS HARPER

DAVIS@CALAVERASENTERPRISE.COM

Wake up at 6 a.m. for a morning briefing, drive an hour-and-a-half to the fireline for a full day's work protecting buildings and putting out spot fires – among other assignments – and head back to camp to shower, eat and get some sleep to start again the next day.

This was the routine that Calaveras Consolidated Fire Protection District (CCFPD) firefighter Logan Hussey lived for nine days on the Walker Fire in Plumas County, about 200 miles north of Calaveras County.

The 26-year-old Valley Springs native was one of 18 Mother Lode-based firefighters sent out with a strike team to battle the blaze that at the time, was the largest in the country.

The fire started on Sept. 4, burned 54,612 acres, destroyed nine structures and was 98% contained as of Sept. 20.

For young firefighters looking to advance their careers, going out on a strike team to fight wildfires across the state is a stepping see **Walker**, A8



Courtesy photo

A fire rages near a fire truck during the Walker Fire in Plumas County in September.