

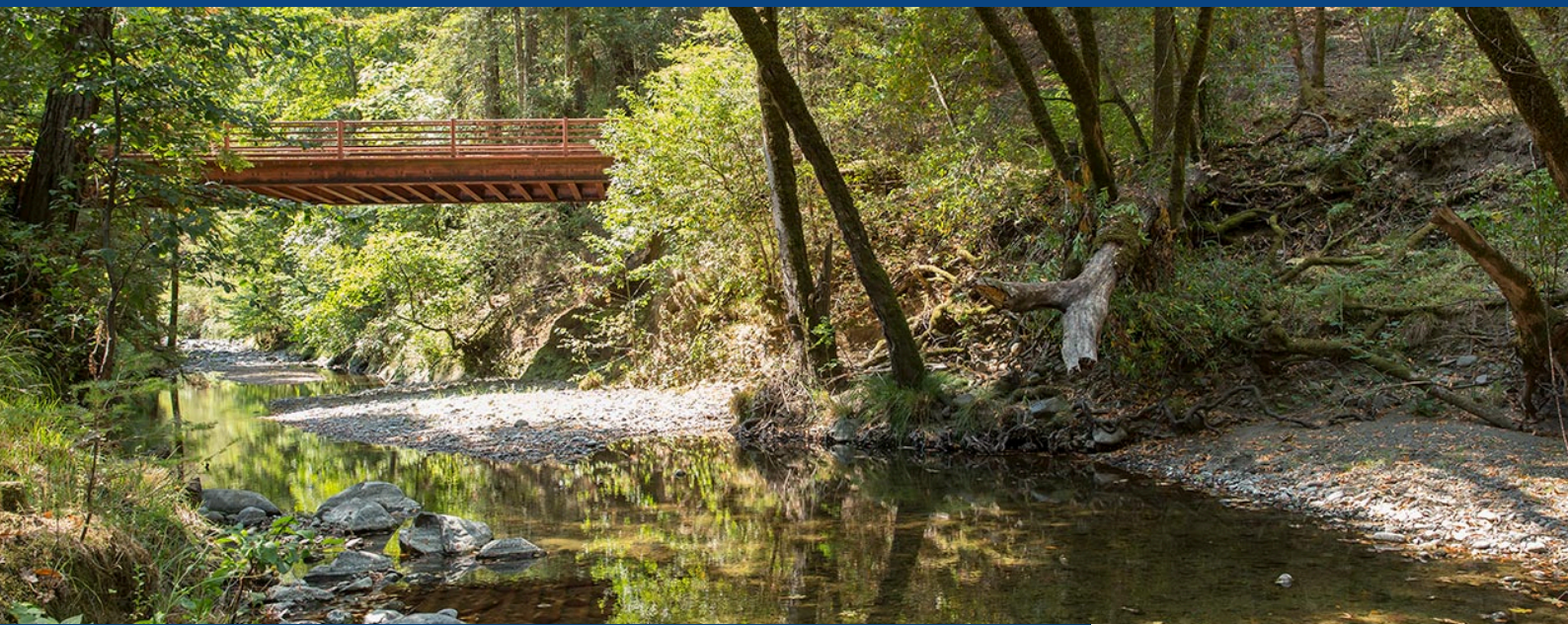


**Mark West Area  
Chamber of Commerce**

# THE LARK

***Business & Community Newsletter Published by  
the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce***

Q1 & Q2 2025 EDITION



## **Included in this edition are updates from the following:**

- Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce
- Mark West Area Municipal Advisory Council (MAC)
- Mark West Area Community Fund
- Mark West Union School District
- Sonoma County Sheriff's Office
- California American Water
- Sonoma Public Infrastructure
- Sonoma County District 4 Supervisor James Gore
- Senator McGuire



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Samantha Paull

I am proud to have served on the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce Board for the past several years and to have the Board entrust me with serving as the Board President last July. Over this past year, I have learned a lot and my gratitude for the opportunity to work alongside the dedicated volunteer board and the many volunteers that support the Chamber in our mission to bring businesses and the community together has continued to grow.

The Mark West area is a special place, and I feel so fortunate to live and work in such a wonderful community. From the many generations that call the area home, to the outstanding school district that provides caring educators and helps shape the future of our community, and of course the various businesses of all types and sizes that keep our area thriving. Not to mention the beauty that surrounds us, and the incredible nonprofits and community groups that help make up the ecosystem that ensures the Mark West area is a warm and inviting place to live, work, and visit.

The Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce has a longstanding history of hard-working community members sharing their leadership and support for our community. I am thankful for the opportunity to collaborate with fellow board members to help carry forward the tireless efforts of the many past presidents and board members who have made the Chamber what it is today. I want to express my gratitude for all those who have served as president, on the board, on a committee or any volunteer role. Each has been a true champion in honoring history, bringing the community together, and paving the path for a strong, bright future for our area.

### *My goal in serving our Mark West community...*

I believe we all have an opportunity to be kind to one another and to support the betterment of our community. I joined the Chamber board to embrace the opportunity to learn while lending time and expertise. For many years before serving on the Chamber board, I lent time and support to our local community including volunteering with the San Miguel PTA, serving on the Board of Extended Child Care and Mark West Little League. My dedication to community support was largely influenced by the good fortune I enjoyed working for an employer that prioritized a people helping people philosophy and those years afforded me the opportunity to enjoy volunteerism. As a small business owner, I find great value in continuing that dedication to being a supportive member of the community. I look forward to sharing that by way of my leadership alongside the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce board of directors.

The "why" behind all that I do, as an individual, wife, mother, daughter, sibling, friend, neighbor, business owner, and community collaborator route back to ensuring our family is healthy and happy - which is influenced greatly by our thriving community. The Mark West area has been our family's home for over 20 years - we are thankful to have raised our son here and to live and work in this beautiful area. I look forward to seeing you at Chamber events and supporting the effort to ensure the Mark West area remains the bountiful place we all love.



Samantha Paull, Board President





## CHAMBER VOLUNTEER BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce is organized to advance the economic well-being and uniqueness of the Mark West Area so that its citizens and all areas of its business community shall prosper.

Your Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce Board is proud to serve our community with the mission of bringing business and the community together.



**Samantha Paull**

President of the Board

**Samantha Paull Planning & Consulting**



**Brad Sherwood**

Past President of the Board

**Individual Member**



**Alicia Mills**

Secretary

**Mark West Union School District Representative**



**Pete Lescure**

Treasure

**Lescure Engineers, Inc**



**Todd Anderson**

VP/Business Services

**Best Western Plus Wine Country Inn & Suites**



**Patrick Dirrane**

VP/Community Services

**California American Water**



**Willie Lamberson**

VP/Government Affairs

**Lamberson Tile**



**Brian Molsberry**

Director

**Molsberry Market's**



**Tracy Mattson**

Director

**COOKIE...take a bite!**

## We invite you to join us in serving our community!

To support the MWACC efforts to provide comprehensive support for its members, effective governance, and a proactive approach to community and economic development, the Chamber Board is comprised of not less than nine (9) Directors nor more than thirteen (13) Directors. We also have Committees with a variety of focus areas and the opportunity to serve as a Chamber Ambassadors, in support enhancing member engagement, welcoming new members, and representing the Chamber in the community.

If you are interested in joining the Board or a have a specific area of focus via a Committee, please share your interest via our online application:

[markwest.org/chamber-board](http://markwest.org/chamber-board)

# CHAMBER ADDRESS CHANGE

Your Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce Board looks to ensure we are always focused on our core purpose, which is bringing business and community together. Over the course of the past several months we have evaluated the value of the physical office location and determined the most efficient operational direction is to forgo that physical space. We have found that the office is not required for us to effectively engage with our community, with limited visitors stopping in for Chamber information. We find that the majority of our communications and interactions with our Members, local businesses and the community is being enjoyed via events, such as our monthly socials, lunch and learns, and so on. We also receive the majority of communications outside of those in-person opportunities via mail and digitally.

To that end, we are grateful for our partner at [Pain and Performance Solutions](#) who will assume use of the space that the Chamber formerly resided within.

We are also thankful to be partnering with Chamber Member, [Postal Plus Inc](#) in the Larkfield Center where the new mailing address for the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce is:

422 Larkfield Center #128  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Please note that Chamber Member, [California American Water](#) who also shares office space with our friends at [Pain and Performance Solutions](#) in the building our former office was located are kindly helping redirect incoming mail temporarily and our address change and mail forwarding has been initiated for future forwarding to this new mailing address.

Our main Chamber email remains: [office@markwest.org](mailto:office@markwest.org) and you can still find updates and Chamber information via our website: [www.markwest.org](http://www.markwest.org).

We look forward to seeing you at an upcoming social and continuing to grow the support we are able to share with our local community.

*Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce Board*



## MARK WEST AREA MUNICIPAL ADVISORY COUNCIL (MAC)

The MAC is an advisory council to the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors. In our case, the Mark West Area MAC provides community input and feedback to District 4 and Supervisor James Gore, for the area covered by the Mark West Union School District.

The MAC is your connection to local government, and we value our relationship with other Mark West area partners including the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce – your connection to local businesses – and the Mark West Area Community Fund – your connection to the local community



Special news! Supervisor James Gore will be attending the MAC meeting on August 13, 2025, at 6:00 pm. Please come hear his presentation and share your thoughts and concerns with Supervisor Gore.

Please join us at the MAC public meetings on the second Wednesday of each month at 6:00 pm at the Learning Center located at the Mark West Union School District office, 315 Mark West Springs Rd. For more information, please visit [www.markwestareamac.org](http://www.markwestareamac.org).



**The MAC is your connection  
to local government!**



PLEASE JOIN THE  
MARK WEST MAC

**MEET & GREET  
WITH  
SUPERVISOR  
GORE**

AUGUST 13, 2025  
6PM

MARK WEST UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT  
LEARNING CENTER  
315 MARK WEST SPRINGS RD

[WWW.MARKWESTAREAMAC.ORG](http://WWW.MARKWESTAREAMAC.ORG)

## MARK WEST AREA COMMUNITY FUND

### BUILDING DREAMS

If you have driven by the site of our new Mark West Area Community Park, located at 4614 Old Redwood Highway, you may have noticed some dirt has been moved and construction activity has begun. The Mark West Area Community Fund, our community's 501-c3 nonprofit, is working to secure the final permits needed to construct the park this summer and fall. Below are a few updates on the park development:

First and foremost - a quick shout out to our non-profit, all volunteer board of directors! This includes Steve Plamann, Dmitri Menzel, Roni Berg, Westin Miller, Heidi Would, Karen Fies, Ron Calloway and Brad Sherwood. These incredible, community-driven individuals have spent countless hours over the last two years working to make this park a reality. Our board is doing serious work behind the scenes to pull all the pieces together and we are so thankful for each one of them. THANK YOU!!!!



**Mark West Area**  
Community Fund



**Learn more & explore  
how you can help!**

# New Mark West Area Community Park Under Construction

The Mark West Area Community Fund is now officially the owner of the park property after nearly a year of collaboration and partnership with the Sonoma Land Trust. The MWACF is thankful for the tremendous partnership with Sonoma Land Trust. Thank you SLT!

Thanks to Sonoma County voters approving Measure F in 2006 to extend a quarter-cent sales tax through 2031, Ag + Open Space has been able to fund projects like our Mark West Area Community Park. The Mark West Area Community Park has benefited from this sales tax through Ag + Open Space's Community Space Matching Grant program. We received \$1,169,500 for the acquisition of the property along with an additional \$300,000 to help support design and planning, and development of basic infrastructure including ADA-compliant pathways and parking.

If you have driven by the park property lately you may have noticed some construction activity! We are starting to clear the property in preparation for grading/drainage work. NorCal Excavation and Trucking has donated their time and equipment to do this work for us – thank you NorCal! Lelo Martinez is an incredible community leader and supporter of the MWACF!

Permitting update – We continue to navigate the permitting process. We have received our use permit and grading/drainage permit. Construction permits for the playground and utility shed are being finalized now. We are grateful for the collaboration with Tennis Wick and his team at Permit Sonoma! Thank you!

Playground equipment, exercise station and picnic tables have been ordered. We anticipate delivery in late July. Installation begins immediately when we receive the equipment – so hopefully in July – and should take a month, or two at most to fully install the playground. Thank you to the Saba Foundation for their ongoing support of funding our park playground and equipment!

BC Engineering is managing our park construction process. William Billeter and his team are top notch, and we can't say thank you enough for their guidance and support.

Holly Construction is partnering with us to build the Doug Williams Gazebo. Thank you!!

Community Soils continues to lead park design and coordination with our construction team. Josho Somine and his team are master park designers!

Pete Lescure Engineering has finalized drainage work which is critical in receiving our construction permits and getting this park built. Thanks, Pete!

Steve Klick with Bauer Associates, Geotechnical Consultants, completed our soil survey at no cost to the nonprofit and park – thank you so much Steve and the team at Bauer Associates!

Brian Curtis and his team at Curtis and Associates conducted the staking for the grading and drainage to be completed. Much appreciation to Brian and the team at Curtis and Associates for the swift and professional work!

Ongoing fundraising support is needed as we continue to implement our full park design plan. For example, for \$2,500 you can help place a bench at the park and have your name or organization engraved into the bench. Donations are also needed to help construct a memorial gazebo for former Chief of Central Fire, Doug Williams. Please visit [www.markwestarea.org](http://www.markwestarea.org) to learn more about donation opportunities.

On Facebook? Join our group where we post updates and photos weekly as construction activities move forward – Mark West Area Community Fund Facebook Group.

Visit the Mark West Area Community Fund online at [www.markwestarea.org](http://www.markwestarea.org) to stay updated and help volunteer or donate for our park!

Thank you for all your support! If you have any questions or wish to donate or volunteer, feel free to call Brad Sherwood at 707-570-7448.



# MARK WEST UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Summer 2025 Update

### ***Hello Mark West Community!***

Though our sites are closed for the summer break, the district office remains open 12 months a year conducting the daily business of the district as well as assisting new parents with Online Enrollment.

Given that our Board of Trustees and district leadership has always made it a priority to focus on the needs of our students and staff while maintaining fiscal responsibility, our enrollment continues to be strong! Those interested in learning more about our district or, enrolling a new TK-6th grade student, may contact Denise Morris at [dmorris@mwusd.org](mailto:dmorris@mwusd.org) or Alicia Mills at [amills@mwusd.org](mailto:amills@mwusd.org).

We look forward to welcoming our students back for the beginning of the 2025-2026 school year on Wednesday, August 13, 2025. As we prepare to welcome students back, there are some exciting changes and additions taking place over the summer. Currently, San Miguel Elementary is undergoing a couple of significant construction projects which include the installation of two, additional portable classrooms as well as a covered walkway project; both of which are scheduled for completion just before the start of the 2025-2026 school year.

The district will also welcome two new members to our Leadership team in the 2025-2026 school year. Many of you may have known Patrick Eagle, Principal of San Miguel Elementary. After many years with the district, Mr. Eagle retired at the end of the 2024-2025 school year and though we wish him continued happiness in his retirement, he will be greatly missed. However, we look forward to welcoming Bennett Holley as he takes the helm as the Principal of San Miguel Elementary this school year. Bennett joins the district with extensive school and district administrative experience and we have no doubt that he will continue the connection with staff, students, and families established by Mr. Eagle.

We also welcome a new staff member to the District Office staff in the 2025-2026 school year. Lisa Warne, the former Director of Instructional Services, chose to return to her passion for teaching in the 2025-2026 school year following three years in district administration. Though Ms. Warne's presence will be missed at the district office, we are so happy for Ms. Warne as she returns to her passion and most importantly, some very lucky students! Joining the district team as the new Director of Instruction and Student Services is Kate Westrich. A former parent in the district, Ms. Westrich joins us from the Sonoma County Office of Education and brings a depth of knowledge having served in the same type of capacity with SCOE. We have the utmost confidence that Ms. Westrich will provide a seamless transition as she begins her new role with the district.

The 2025-2026 school year also brings a new program to the district which we are very excited to offer; a Visual and Performing Arts program; fondly known as "VAPA". As many of you are aware, our amazing music teacher, Kara Kaufman, has grown the music program significantly since she joined the district and in partnership with the district, Ms. Kaufman is eager to welcome Benjamin Ehrmann, our new VAPA teacher. We look forward to implementing this new program at all of our sites and the expansion of our visual and performing arts program.

In closing, I want to reiterate again how much we value our participation as members of the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce. We are a very close knit community and on behalf of the Board of Trustees, I want to thank all of our local business partners who continually support the Mark West Union School District. You too are part of our educational community and we sincerely value our shared connection.

With continued appreciation of our community,

**Dr. Rachel Valenzuela**

Superintendent, Mark West Union School District

## UPDATES FROM THE SONOMA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



### Message from Sheriff Engram

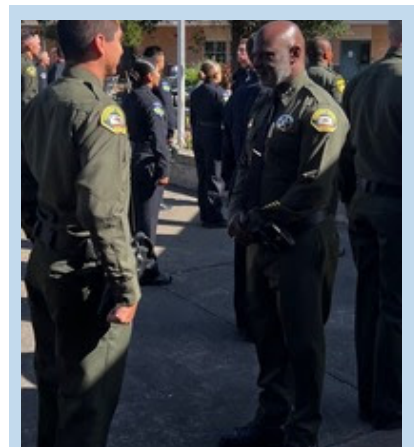
I have great news to share!

The Sheriff's Office is fully funded for the 2025–2026 fiscal year with a budget of \$246 million, ensuring no disruptions to our services or programs.

I'm especially pleased to announce continued funding for our critical efforts in the fight against opioids. The budget supports a dedicated five-person Narcotics Unit for the upcoming fiscal year.

This team has already made a remarkable impact. In just five months, they made 78 arrests, seized dozens of firearms, confiscated tens of thousands of dollars in cash, and removed more than \$2 million worth of drugs from our streets.

I want to sincerely thank the Board of Supervisors and the County Administrator's Office for their ongoing support. I look forward to building on this momentum and continuing our work to keep the community safe.



[Watch Sheriff Engram's video](#)



[Learn more about the program:](#)

**Partners - Canine Companions**



### Canine Companions Graduation at MADF

Last September, the Sheriff's Office partnered with Canine Companions to launch an innovative puppy training program inside our Main Adult Detention Facility (MADF). Select incarcerated individuals were chosen to raise and train service-dog puppies, learning vital life skills rooted in consistency, responsibility, accountability, and empathy.

The 12–16-month program starts with puppies aged 2–4 months and involves both incarcerated and community trainers. Together, they lay the groundwork for these dogs to become future service animals.

We're thrilled to celebrate our first graduating class! In late June, several pups completed their in-facility training and are now advancing with Canine Companions to one day assist individuals in our community.

We're grateful for this partnership with Canine Companions, which equips incarcerated individuals with meaningful skills and relationships while providing our community with highly trained service dogs.

# NOW HIRING LATERAL DEPUTY SHERIFFS

We are hiring experienced peace officers to join our team as lateral deputy sheriffs. A career with our office is more than just patrol work—it's a chance to grow. Deputies have a wide array of specialties they can dive into throughout their careers, from the Helicopter Unit to K-9 squads, marine patrols to community outreach. We pride ourselves on a culture of camaraderie and a team-oriented approach to policing, ensuring that lateral officers are welcomed into a family-like environment from day one. With a strong emphasis on work-life balance, those who join our ranks can enjoy the stunning natural beauty and vibrant lifestyle that the region is famed for, making it not just a job, but a lifestyle choice. Lateral applicants earn an excellent salary and benefits under a recently negotiated contract.



[Learn more or submit an application](#)

## Property Crimes Detectives Investigation— Scam Alert

Our Property Crimes Detectives recently investigated a courier scam targeting older adults in our community. Scammers, posing as banks, law enforcement agencies, or delivery services, exploit trust by creating a sense of urgency—claiming compromised accounts or held packages—to steal cash, bank cards, or personal information. They may arrange courier pickups, send fake delivery notifications with malicious links, or use cash-on-delivery (COD) schemes with worthless items.

Stay alert. Here are a few ways to protect yourself and others:

- Always verify unexpected calls or messages with official sources
- Never give out your PIN, account numbers or passwords
- Be cautious with unexpected deliveries or cash-on-delivery packages
- Report any suspicious activity to law enforcement

Stay vigilant and spread awareness to protect vulnerable neighbors.



[Read the press release](#)



## MEET YOUR SHERIFF'S OFFICE AND LOCAL FIRE DEPARTMENT

Formerly known as a Town Hall, our next Meet and Greet will be a joint event with the Graton Fire Department. Please join us on Thursday, September 11 from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the Graton Fire Department. This is an opportunity to learn about wildfire preparedness and discuss topics such as use of force, detention, public information, patrol functions, recruitment, or any other subjects that interest you. Sheriff Engram will provide a brief update at the beginning, followed by casual interactions with our staff. Drop by when you can and leave whenever you'd like.



**Find Out More**

SONOMA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
GRATON FIRE DEPARTMENT

# MEET *And Greet*

This is a joint event with no set agenda. Hear a brief update from Sheriff Engram, then enjoy one-on-one conversations with the people who serve you. Stop by when you can, leave when you'd like.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11  
5:30-6:30PM

GRATON FIRE DEPARTMENT  
3750 GRAVENSTEIN HWY N  
SEBASTOPOL, CA 95472

@sonomasheriff sonomasheriff.org

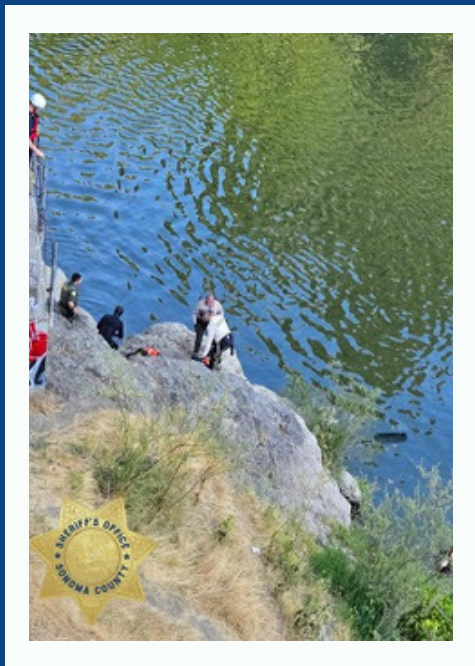
### Summer Water Safety

As temperatures rise and more people head to our rivers, lakes, and coastal areas, it's important to keep safety top of mind. Each year, preventable accidents occur on the water—many of which can be avoided with a few simple precautions.

Here are a few key safety tips to help you and your loved ones stay safe this summer:

- Wear a life jacket: Make sure everyone—especially children—wears a properly fitted life jacket.
- Drink responsibly: If anyone chooses to consume alcohol while on or near the water, please do so responsibly. Alcohol can impair your judgement and potentially lead to dangerous situations. It can also lead to a boating under the influence arrest.
- Stay alert and know the conditions: Waterways like the Russian River and the Sonoma Coast can be unpredictable. Know the current, depth, and weather forecast before heading out.
- Supervise children closely: Even shallow water can be dangerous. Always have a responsible adult actively watching.
- Be prepared: Check your gear, tell someone your plans, and know emergency contact numbers.

Whether you're paddling, swimming, or just relaxing near the shore, a little preparation can make all the difference. Let's work together to keep this summer safe and enjoyable for everyone



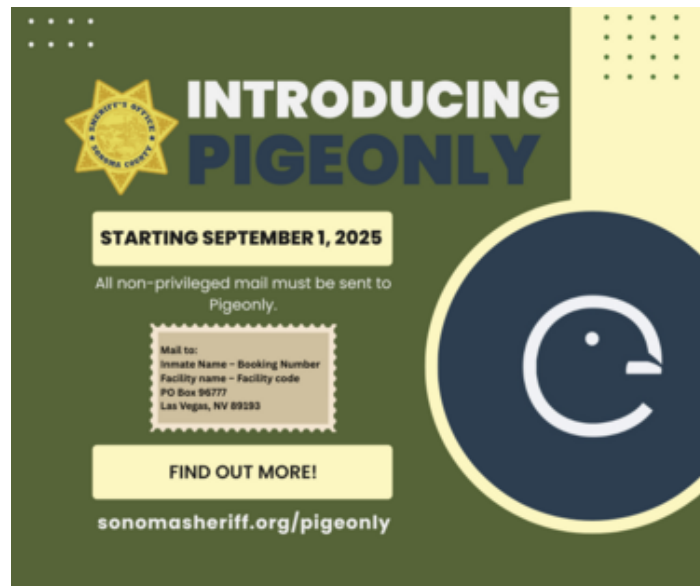
## INTRODUCING PIGEONLY

We're updating how non-privileged mail is processed at the Sonoma County Jail to help improve efficiency, safety, and service. Starting September 1, 2025, all non-privileged incarcerated persons' mail must be sent through Pigeonly, a secure digital mail service.

Pigeonly allows friends and family to send letters and photos to their incarcerated loved ones more conveniently—either online or by mailing items directly to a new designated address. The service helps streamline mail delivery, reduce contraband, and ensure messages get to inmates faster and more reliably.

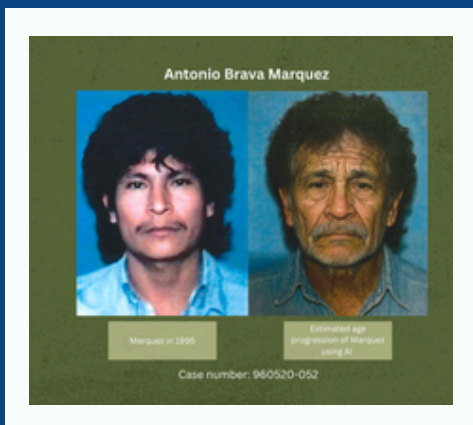
Privileged mail (such as legal or court-related correspondence) will not be affected by this change and must still be sent directly to the jail.

Please visit our website to learn more about Pigeonly and how to send mail to an incarcerated person.



**Learn about Pigeonly**

## The Cold Case Unit Needs Your Help!



The Sonoma County Sheriff's Office Cold Case Unit is actively pursuing justice for victims like Alfonso Reyes Martinez, a 50-year-old brutally shot and buried in a shallow grave near the Alexander Valley Bridge, north of Healdsburg, on May 20, 1996. While Tiburcio Ramirez Olivero, an 18-year-old Healdsburg transient, was convicted as an accessory to murder, the prime suspect, Antonio Bravo Marquez, remains at large. Known by aliases such as Antonio Marquez Bravo or Antonio Brava, Marquez likely fled to Fresno or Mexico.

Marquez is a 61-year-old Hispanic male, 5'3", with a medium build, short black hair, brown eyes, and possibly a light mustache. At the time of the murder, Bravo was employed as vineyard laborer and lived in a transient encampment near the intersection of Highway 128 and Alexander Valley Road. He was known to drive a white or tan 1973 Ford Maverick with a brown vinyl top.

We urge anyone with information about Antonio Bravo Marquez's whereabouts to come forward and help bring closure to Martinez's family. Please contact the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office at (707) 565-2727. To stay anonymous, submit tips online at [sonomasheriff.org/silent-witness](https://sonomasheriff.org/silent-witness).

Case No: 960520-052

## CALIFORNIA AMERICAN WATER UPDATE



### WE'RE INVESTING IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

#### LARKFIELD WATER TREATMENT PLANT PROJECT

In our ongoing commitment to improving the Larkfield water system, California American Water will be installing a new water storage tank and booster pump station at the Larkfield Water Treatment Plant.

The project is part of California American Water's commitment to ongoing infrastructure investments to improve service.



#### PROJECT SCOPE AND SUMMARY

California American Water's project will include the addition of a new 500,000-gallon storage tank and booster pump station at the Larkfield Water Treatment Plant. Both will be used for domestic and fire demands. This project also includes a new emergency standby generator, electrical service upgrades, and perimeter fencing.

#### BE SAFE. KEEP TRAFFIC FLOWING.

Your safety, as well as the safety of your neighbors and our workers, is important to us! We work hard to keep our job sites safe, and we appreciate your effort to slow down and use caution around the construction site.



## SONOMA PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE



Summertime means construction time for Sonoma County Public Infrastructure as we work diligently to complete critical road repair and maintenance projects before the weather changes.

### Current Projects

We have six active construction projects occurring throughout the county. Here are the flash updates:

- Wohler Bridge over the Russian River bridge retrofit project is on target for completion of the foundation work by fall.
- Contractors are installing a temporary bridge as they continue repairs on the Geysers Road Bridge over Frasier Creek, east of Cloverdale.
- Over at North Fitch Mountain, in Healdsburg, construction crews are installing drainage as part of the 2017 landslide repair.
- Storm damage restoration is taking place on Pine Mountain Road on the northern most side of Sonoma County where recently a temporary traffic signal was installed.
- Stewarts Point Skaggs Road in Geyserville is on track with slide repair construction tasks.
- And on Westside Road, contractors are installing a retaining wall as part of its slide repair plan.

We also have a flurry of road maintenance projects under our Pavement Preservation Program.

We sincerely thank the community for your continued patience and understanding as roads and bridges are closed for repairs while we work diligently to ensure our roads remain safe and accessible for Sonoma County residents and visitors.

Stay up to speed on road projects by following us on social media:

- 🔗 <https://www.facebook.com/SonomaCoPI>
- 🔗 <https://www.instagram.com/sonomacountypi/>



## SONOMA COUNTY UPDATE DISTRICT 4 SUPERVISOR JAMES GORE



In a recent interview on KRCB's The 707, Supervisor James Gore reflected on his term as President of the National Association of Counties (NACo), where he represented more than 3,000 counties across the U.S. His leadership on the national stage has helped secure real results for Sonoma County, used federal cuts to FEMA that would shift disaster response costs onto local governments.

From leading FEMA reform efforts to advocating for more responsive federal disaster aid, Supervisor Gore has used our county's hard-earned experience with wildfires, flooding, and recovery to drive national policy change. He extended NACo's Intergovernmental Disaster Reform Task Force in direct response to proposed federal cuts to FEMA that would shift disaster response costs onto local governments.

"Sonoma County's experience has become a model for how counties across the nation can build resilience," Gore said. "And I've worked to make sure our challenges and our lessons are driving better policy in Washington."

His national role has also opened doors to grant opportunities and state and federal funding streams. Gore has teamed up with county departments to secure major investments in permanent supportive housing, climate resilience, and infrastructure. These efforts include funding from FEMA hazard mitigation programs and state grants that have helped fast-track local housing and water projects.

"Every time I meet with federal agencies, I have a list of Sonoma County priorities in my hand," he said. "I'm not just there to represent counties broadly—I'm there to deliver for our community."

Gore also emphasized why local government leadership matters now more than ever: "Counties are in the trenches of democracy. We don't just debate—we deliver. And what happens at the local level affects people's lives every single day."



[Listen to the interview here](#)

# A PRUDENT BUDGET FOR UNCERTAIN TIMES

**\$2.98 Billion** 2026 ▾ July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026

● Expenditure Budget broken down by Service ▾



- Administrative Support & Fiscal Services
- Health & Human Services
- Natural Resources
- Development Services
- Justice Services
- Capital Projects

The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to adopt a balanced budget for the 2025–26 fiscal year, which began July 1. While the budget reflects a commitment to core services and long-term financial stability, the Board noted that future adjustments may be necessary depending on changes in state or federal funding.

The adopted budget includes \$459 million in discretionary General Fund revenue and a total of \$2.33 billion from all sources, including \$918 million in state and federal funding. It also includes a net reduction of 12 full-time equivalent positions, resulting in a County workforce of 4,490.

The Board reaffirmed its commitment to paying down unfunded pension liabilities, setting aside 0.5 percent of payroll for prepayments on that debt. Supervisors also approved ongoing funding for the Sheriff’s Office narcotics unit, transitioning it from a two-year pilot program to a permanent part of public safety operations.

The Board emphasized that the County’s budget reflects local priorities—fiscal responsibility, essential services, and adaptability in the face of an evolving economic landscape.



[Learn more about the new budget](#)



## Preliminary Count Shows 23% Drop in Sonoma County Homelessness

Sonoma County saw a significant decrease in homelessness this year, according to preliminary results from the 2025 Point-in-Time Count, which recorded 1,952 people experiencing homelessness—a 23% drop from 2024 and the lowest total since the count began in 2007.

The number of unsheltered individuals fell by 29%, a decrease of 570 people. County officials credit new housing initiatives and targeted support services as key drivers of the improvement.

While this progress is encouraging, officials also cautioned that looming state and federal funding cuts could reverse these gains. A full report, including demographic breakdowns and city-by-city data, will be released later this summer.



[Read news release](#)

## Sonoma County Unveils Vision For New Government Center

Sonoma County is moving forward with plans to modernize its aging government center in Santa Rosa. A new five-story office building is slated to break ground in 2027, with County employees expected to move in by 2030.

The project will replace outdated facilities at the 26-acre site on Administration Drive. In addition to new County offices, the plan includes long-term potential for up to 1,500 residential units and mixed-use development on the eastern portion of the property.



[Read news release](#)

## Asti Seasonal Crossing Open For Public Use



Good news—this year’s Asti Seasonal Crossing is officially open for public use.

This crossing is a critical lifeline for local residents, emergency responders, and regional connectivity—especially during fire season. Installing it this year was particularly complex, with high river flows and overlapping permit requirements. Thanks to the tireless work of our Public Infrastructure and Permit Sonoma teams, we were able to get it done safely.

Please use caution when driving through, slow down, and report any hazards you may notice so they can be addressed quickly.

While the County remains committed to installing the seasonal crossing each year, we continue to pursue a long-term solution—a permanent bridge—to provide year-round access and reduce disruption.

Thank you to the community for your patience, support, and partnership as we work toward more resilient infrastructure for the future.



[Learn about the permanent bridge project](#)

# Planning For A Resilient Water Future



Sonoma Water has released an updated Water Supply Roadmap, a forward-looking plan to secure and enhance our region's water resilience through 2045. This strategic document outlines a portfolio of projects designed to increase water supply, improve system redundancy, and adapt to the realities of climate change and drought.

Key initiatives include Forecast-Informed Reservoir Operations (FIRO) at Lake Mendocino and Lake Sonoma, innovative Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) projects in Sebastopol and along Occidental Road, and potential new infrastructure like a secondary outlet from Lake Sonoma. Together, these efforts could add more than 100,000 acre-feet of water supply annually over the coming decades.

The roadmap also emphasizes regional partnerships, such as the Eel-Russian Diversion Project, which aims to sustain vital seasonal diversions from the Eel River to the Russian River watershed after PG&E decommissions the Potter Valley Project.

By investing in these solutions now, Sonoma Water is working to ensure reliable, sustainable water supplies for future generations. To explore the full plan and learn how these projects will benefit our communities:



Visit [SonomaWater.org](https://SonomaWater.org)



## Message from Senator Mike McGuire

### Great Redwood Trail Town Hall – August 12

#### Will We See You This Coming Tuesday?

We wanted to check back in and see if you can join us next week for our annual Great Redwood Trail Town Hall on Tuesday, August 12.

Once completed, the Great Redwood Trail (GRT) will stretch 320 miles from the San Francisco Bay to the rugged shores of Humboldt Bay. The Trail will traverse through some of the most spectacular landscapes on earth, including ancient redwoods, state parks and national forests, oak-studded hills, lush vineyards, and along the shores of the mighty Eel and Russian Rivers.

We also know the GRT will be an economic driver here on the North Coast, generating tens of millions annually and benefiting some of the most rural communities in the state.

During the Town Hall, we'll discuss the major momentum with GRT development, from the recently opened Eureka to Arcata Humboldt Bay Trail, to the miles of GRT pathway being built along the SMART rail lines in Marin and Sonoma Counties.

Bring your questions about trail construction, timeline, budget, wildfire prevention and security, neighborhood engagement, and more.

#### MEETING DETAILS:

**What:** Join Senator McGuire, the Great Redwood Trail Agency, and Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) for a Town Hall about the Great Redwood Trail

**When:** August 12 at 6:00 PM

How to attend: RSVP today by clicking [here](#). After you RSVP, we'll email the video livestream link and call-in number.

We look forward to seeing you this Tuesday, August 12. Have a good rest of the week.

Warm regards,  
**MIKE McGUIRE**  
Senator



**RSVP ONLINE!**

# Upcoming Q3 Chamber Events

Join us on August 28 for a

## MULTI-CHAMBER OF COMMERCE MIXER

5:30pm-7:30pm at



We are partnering with Luther Burbank Center for the Arts and event partners such as Encore Events Rentals, Rodney Strong Vineyards (more to be announced) to host an evening of networking with fellow community members in the sculpture garden courtyard!

## MULTI-CHAMBER COLLABORATION OF:



Join us to connect with local community members and business leaders! Share ideas and grow your network in a relaxed, fun setting.



August | 28  
5:30pm-7:30pm



Luther Burbank Center for the Arts  
50 Mark West Springs Road  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Don't forget to RSVP to help our food & beverage partners plan accordingly!



## Join Us Sept. 11

We're looking forward to enjoying an evening mixing & mingling with our community at the social hosted by **Accent Printing & Design, Inc.** where we will also enjoy the opportunity to learn more about North Bay Honor Flight



Thursday,  
September 11, 2025 5:30pm to 7:30pm

REGISTER NOW



5468 Skylane Blvd, Suite D,  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Mark West Area  
Chamber of Commerce



## Join Us Oct. 9

We're looking forward to enjoying an evening mixing & mingling with our community at the upcoming October Social hosted by **Treasure House Fine Home Consignments**

Thursday,  
October 9, 2025 5:30pm to 7:30pm

REGISTER NOW



3450E Airway Dr.,  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Mark West Area  
Chamber of Commerce

