



Bennett Valley
VOICE

Inside This Issue:

Bennett Valley Area Plan
Bennett Valley Tidbits
BV Common Ground Committee
BV Clean-up Day
Changes in Annadel, Fire Resistant Plants
CALL FOR PHOTOS!
Your Pets & Summer Heat
Wildlife Resources

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Bennett Valley Homeowners Association

JULY, 2000

BEETLES KILLING CALIF. LIVE OAKS: IN BENNETT VALLEY, TOO?"

"In localized areas of Marin County...tiny beetles have killed hundreds of the stately California live oak. The epidemic is unprecedented in modern time." So far, there have been five Calif. live oaks in Savannah Estates, just off Bennett Valley Road, which have apparently died with these same symptoms. There are also unconfirmed reports of even more live oak trees which have died along Bennett Valley Road, to the west and along Warm Springs Road. Before now these beetles (Ambrosia and Oak Bark Beetles) have only attacked weakened or dead oak trees but now in certain areas, they are apparently attacking and killing off great numbers of healthy oak trees. This epidemic seems to start with tanoaks, which are related to oak trees, but are not a true oak. "Tan oaks ... sudden death has preceded the beetle epidemic in nearby California live oaks ...The exact sequence of events that leads to the death of the oaks is still not completely understood."

The live oak is an evergreen tree with dense branching and small leaves (1 to 3 inches long). The beetles seem to be playing an imminent part in the death of these oaks, but a number of different factors could be contributing to the decline of the trees. This includes a fungus which can be introduced into the trees by these beetles. "...just because there is serious tree limb-dieback or mortality, does not mean, necessarily, that ...beetles are the cause of the problem. An inspection by a knowledgeable arborist may help discern the cause...Dead tanoaks and California live oaks should be cut down as soon as possible after... (it is certain) that the tree and or

limbs are actually dead. In a fatally attacked California live oak, the entire leaf canopy will suddenly wilt slightly, leaf color will fade, and then finally all the foliage will dry... Firewood (from these dead logs) must immediately be covered with heavy (6 mil) clear plastic for six months. Stumps should be ground out or covered with clear plastic. This will reduce the chance of the infested firewood and stumps from becoming a nursery for new beetles ..." Maintaining a healthy environment around the California live oak trees is the best prevention which can be done. "Particularly important is...to maintain root health... Foot and vehicle traffic compacts soil and reduces water, air and nutrient movement to the roots. Soil trenching under the drip line of the tree may injure... roots. Frequent irrigation enhances some root diseases..." While there are pesticides which can be effective in controlling these beetles, "Only consider spraying...within a short distance from areas with known beetle epidemics of tanoaks or California live oaks." For prevention, the following is advised:

■ Removing... dead and damaged branches to maintain healthy, vigorous oaks...Pruning oaks...only from November to February when the beetles are not active. Avoid heavy (severe) pruning that opens the oak canopy to physiological stress..."

■ Regularly check live oaks and tanoaks from March to October for ...(appearance of dark brown to black globules and stains on the bark surface) and reddish-brown boring dust. Immediately spray the infested trunk (up to 10 ft. above the ground) to prevent further infestation...(For more complete up-to-date information on spraying, you may call 526-6055.)

"Protecting Live Oaks Against Bark Beetles and Ambrosia Beetles", by Pavel Svihra, Univ. Of Calif. Coop. Extension, Jan. 2000, "Beetles Killing Stately California Live Oaks: A Practical Guide", Steve Tjosvold & Pavel Svihra, UC Extension

BENNETT VALLEY AREA PLAN (BVAP)

Some realtors have recently stated, erroneously, that they understood the Bennett Valley Area Plan was no longer in effect. The Bennett Valley Area Plan, including the Design Review Guidelines, continues to be in effect and is being enforced by (Sonoma County) Permit and Resource Management Dept. (PRMD). When new structures, remodeled structures, or grading are proposed, the Design Review approval is now being done by PRMD.

Sellers of Bennett Valley property and listing real estate agents are required to disclose the existence of the Bennett Valley Area Plan and the Design Review Guidelines as a material fact to potential buyers, prior to the completion of the sale. We continue to hear of instances where this has not been done which is in violation of the law.

The goal of the Bennett Valley Area Plan is to retain and enhance the rural character of the Valley. By carefully considering the Design Review standards in the Bennett Valley Area Plan and presenting a project to Sonoma County PRMD with the intent of the Plan in mind, the building process will go more smoothly and quickly. If you would care for a copy of the Bennett Valley Area Plan or further clarification of the Plan, please feel free to call Lois Brown, 578-0708.

BENNETT VALLEY VOLUNTEERS

Bennett Valley volunteers under the auspices of the Bennett Valley Homeowners Association (BVHA), have been doing liaison work with Sonoma County and the Bennett Valley Fire Protection District. This has included such things as regularly obtaining information about the Grange Road Bridge or Bennett Valley roads or attending the Board of Directors' meeting for the Bennett Valley Fire Station. For a number of years, the Bennett Valley Homeowners Assoc. has also been obtaining information about what is being proposed as a special project and/or land-use issues in Bennett Valley from Sonoma County PRMD. We are looking for a pool of Bennett Valley volunteers who would be interested in helping with these various contacts. If you are interested, please contact Marilee Jensen at 576-0405.

BENNETT VALLEY TIDBITS

◆ **GRANGE ROAD BRIDGE UPDATE** - The Federal Highway Administration's environmental approval has been obtained for this proposed bridge. The County is now requesting an appropriation for designing the bridge closer to the old bridge, with fewer oak trees removed, as requested by the Board of Supervisors two years ago. They are also exploring the possibility of using pre-fab steel parts for the bridge, which would make the work of putting up the bridge go faster. The earliest possible date for the beginning of construction is spring of 2001, and it may well take longer to obtain the necessary approvals and funds.

◆ **BENNETT VALLEY FIRE STATION** - Two new Firefighters have been hired at the Bennett Valley Fire Station, starting 7/1/00. They are **Duncan Smith** and **Brandon Palmer**. The plan is to introduce them to the BV Fire Board of Directors & the community at the July Meeting on 7/11/00. Following the VOICE request for contributions last month for the BV Fire Station, someone donated a much-needed new refrigerator. Now they need someone to help them get their very sturdy commercial oven repaired, as at this time a number of the burners are not working. This oven is used to provide the firefighters, both paid and volunteer, with two meals a day.

◆ **BENNETT VALLEY 2000** - As mentioned in earlier issues, this meeting has been scheduled at the Bennett Valley Grange Hall on Saturday, October 14th, from 8:30 am until noon. We are planning to begin the meeting with a presentation by Don Tarpley of some of the history of Bennett Valley. He is in the process of writing a book on this subject. Also, Bob Hasenick has agreed to be the neutral "facilitator" for an open-ended Community Forum. If you have any other ideas about what should be discussed at this meeting, or if you are willing to help on the planning committee, please be sure to call Marilee Jensen, at 576-0405.

◆ **MATANZAS CREEK WATERSHED GROUP** You have been hearing about this for over a year now, but confirmation has just recently been received that Sotoyome Resource Conservation District will be proceeding to form this watershed group. You can expect to receive further information soon.

◆ **BENNETT RIDGE MOUNTAIN LION** A mountain lion has been observed in an area of Bennett Ridge near Annadel State Park and Bennett Mountain, on occasion throughout this last year. No threatening behavior has been reported. Although there is no great alarm, State Fish & Game material has been distributed to residents, advising awareness & caution, especially with young children & pets. It is said that where there are deer, their primary food source, there are likely to be mountain lions.

BENNETT VALLEY COMMON GROUND

On June 8th, at 7:30 pm, Supervisor Mike Cale met with the Bennett Valley Common Ground Committee, consisting of ten Bennett Valley residents, to hear a presentation of the three alternatives on which all the committee members could agree. A summary of each of these alternatives follows:

"WELCOME" PAMPHLET TO BENNETT VALLEY

A. Intent: Attract and Enhance

1. An attractive pamphlet for realtors, planners, etc., that would be its own incentive for distribution.
2. Enhance the perceived notion of community values and co-operation.

B. Purpose: Inform and Alert

1. Information on Bennett Valley history and geology, homeowners groups, the character of Bennett Valley and intent to preserve it.
2. Alert to the existence of the PRMD-administered Bennett Valley Area Plan and Design Review and the special requirements set forth therein.
3. Include a supplemental list of people who can be contacted for possible questions or information re: Bennett Valley.

C. Who's It For: Potential Owners/Builders

D. **Distribution:** Current Bennett Valley residents, Real Estate brokers, agents & potential buyers and PRMD applicants, residing in Bennett Valley.

OPTIONAL BENNETT VALLEY ORIENTATION

As mentioned in B3. above, there would be a supplemental list of names of individual Bennett Valley residents who are willing to be contacted to answer questions or provide information about Bennett Valley and/or the Bennett Valley Area Plan. An effort will be made to recruit at least one Bennett Valley volunteer residing on each of the major streets or areas in Bennett Valley. This contact would be optional for the parcel owner and could be a telephone conversation, exchange of written material, or a face-to-face meeting.

BENNETT VALLEY WEB SITE REPORT ONLINE

PRMD is working on creating a web site. Once it is created, then Bennett Valley Area Plan information can be referenced on this web site. A committee will be selected to create the web site, with PRMD making the final determination as to what can be included.

Mike Cale seemed to be very supportive of each of these alternatives. At the Bennett Valley Homeowners Assoc. Board of Directors meeting, on 6/21/00, some of the Board members were absent so the decision to approve and proceed with these ideas was continued until the next meeting, on 7/19/00.

BENNETT VALLEY CLEAN-UP DAY

On Saturday, June 3rd, at 8:30 am, eighteen people showed up at the Bennett Valley Fire Station to help with the scheduled Bennett Valley Clean-up Day. Their names are as follows:

Jim Alfieri, Lee Babineaux, Bobbie Blair, Norm & Eve Boling, Lois Brown, Michael Cronin, Suzanne Dougherty, Marilee Jensen, Raymond Lemieux, Terrie Lockwood, Gary McLerran, Dave & Sandy Sandine, Sharon & Bob Sorani, and Bill Sullivan

Coffee and donuts were provided, as advertised, with the firefighters gladly finishing the leftovers. Eve Boling was the Chair of Clean-up Day. She made all the necessary arrangements, such as preparing the advance announcement and providing the refreshments and other supplies, including the plastic bags, vests, hand-picker tools and a volunteer with a truck to pick up the bags of litter once they were full. She mentioned that Jim Alfieri deserved an extra note of thanks for his help in securing vests for people & arranging contacts with other helpful resources.

The plan is to do this twice a year, with the next date tentatively scheduled for Saturday, October 21st. Some of the changes which are being proposed include putting up a reminder sign in front of the Bennett Valley Fire Station the preceding week and printing safety instructions for people who are walking along these busy roads picking up the litter.

John Maitland, Supervisor of Road Maintenance for Sonoma County Public Works, has proposed that one of his litter crews do the pick-up in the future along the more precarious locations in Bennett Valley.

Prior to the next Clean-up Day, there will be a meeting of interested volunteers to help make these arrangements.

A number of past volunteers felt that each clean-up day, there is less litter than the time before. However they've also noted that it never takes long for new litter to appear in the same locations where it was just cleaned up.

CHANGES IN ANNADEL STATE PARK

As reported recently in the Press Democrat, some changes are being made in Annadel State Park for the purpose of restoring and maintaining the natural environment. One of the recent changes has been to temporarily close Marsh Trail. This will allow for reconstruction and rerouting to eliminate and prevent the culverts, erosion and run-off as have occurred in the past. Marsh Trail is considered a part of the "Bay Area Ridge Trails" so it will be maintained as a multi-use trail for hiking, bicycles and horses. In order to accomplish this, it will be redone as a five-foot wide trail, with one and one half foot clearance on either side with no vehicle access.

The revised Wildfire Management Plan for Annadel State Park includes the following:

1. "Fire Fuel" along the trails in Annadel State Park will be significantly reduced by cutting down dead trees, increasing limb height and weed-wacking. In addition to this effort, many fir trees are being eliminated as a fire hazard and because they are invasive non-native trees which interfere with the prime oak woodlands (which are native, more "fire resistant" and valuable to wildlife).

2. The Park Rangers are planning to obtain Global Positioning Systems (GPS), all-terrain vehicles and possibly fire radios for improved communication about emergencies in the park, including the exact locations. There will also be coordinated training for the Park Rangers with local fire personnel.

3. When there are extreme fire conditions with low humidity, high temperatures and a north wind, there will be a fire closure, closing off the public's access to Annadel State Park. This typically happens about ten days a year.

4. If a wildfire does start in Annadel, then the local fire personnel will use the outlying emergency access roads to Annadel and set back fires, as indicated, to stop the fire from reaching homes in the vicinity of the park. Also, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection will be available with their tanker planes and helicopters to help fight wildfires.

VEGETATION: FIRE RESISTANT VS. HIGH FIRE HAZARD (PYROPHYTIC)

(Information taken almost verbatim from, "Pyrophytic vs. Fire Resistant Plants, October, 1998, Ray Moritz, Fire Ecologist and Technical Advisor to FireSafe Marin; and Pavel Svihra, Horticulture Advisor, Marin & Sonoma Counties. To obtain the actual lists of fire resistant, pyrophitic & screen plants, contact Sonoma Co. Emergency Services, for a copy of this publication.)

FLAMMABILITY & CONDITION

The condition of the plant is as important as its species. Even some "pyrophytic" species can be quite fire-resistant if properly maintained....Water-stressed plants that are in poor condition are more pyrophytic. A pyrophytic species becomes explosively flammable when poorly maintained.

Fire-resistant plants tend to have the following:

- Most are broad-leaf deciduous trees but some thick-leaf evergreens are also fire-resistant.
- Leaves tend to be supple, moist and easily crushed.
- Trees tend to be clean, not bushy, and have little deadwood.
- Shrubs are low-growing (2') with minimal dead material. Tall shrubs are clean, not bushy.
- Sap is water-like and typically without strong odor.

Pyrophytic vegetation types are as follows:

Grasses: Any cured (dry) grass...Irrigated grasses are fire resistant.

Herbs/Ferns: Any dry or cured herb or fern, particularly cured bracken & sword ferns.

Brush: Any brush with excessive deadwood. Any over-mature, dying or dead brush.

Trees: Any forest that is over-dense, under stress or with excessive deadwood.

- When thinning woodlands, first remove sick, dying and dead trees.
- Second, remove or clean up trees with excessive deadwood.
- Third, remove highly flammable species (needle leaf and blade leaf trees with volatile oils).

■ Tree crowns should be separated by at least ten feet, with five additional feet for every 10% increase in slope. All tree crowns should be raised at least ten feet above the ground. Thin out tree crowns (up to 25%) to reduce total fuels. ■ Remove dead branches and large areas of dead foliage, all vines, and loose papery bark. ■ Remove all flammable undergrowth and woody debris.

Privacy Screen Plants: Densely planted hedges and screens compete for the limited water and nutrients on the site and are usually in poor health, making these plantings more flammable. There are certain screen plants listed in this publication which are "relatively more fire-resistant", when and if properly maintained

CALL FOR PHOTOS !

BENNETT VALLEY CALENDAR, 2001

For our second Bennett Valley Homeowners Association Calendar we're inviting residents to send in favorite images of Bennett Valley, both views and close ups of your special places, flora, fauna, structures and vistas of the valley. Please send original prints (not slides), preferably horizontal with dates and place names to:

Stephanie Zaborowski
4184 Sonoma Mountain Road
Santa Rosa, CA 95404
(707) 528-9858

**DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS:
SEPTEMBER 10, 2000**

Based on your comments, the Bennett Valley 2001 Calendar will feature large squares! sturdy paper! holidays! moon phases! and descriptions and names of photographers under their pictures!

BENNETT VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT CALLS - 7/4/2000

by Joe Stans, Assistant Fire Chief, Bennett Valley Firefighters' Association

As of this date, we are just about in the middle of the year. So far we have responded to 100 calls, which turns out to be more than a call every other day. Last year at this time we only had responded to 69 calls, with a total of 157 calls for the year. That is a 45% increase over last year, midway through the year.

<u>Reason for Call</u>	<u>Number</u>
Medical Aid	37
Vehicle Accidents	20
Mutual Aid	13
Alarm Sounding	10
Public Assistance	5
Illegal Burn	4
Wires Down	4
Other (tree down)	3
Vehicle Fire	2
Structure Fire	1
Vegetation Fire	1

SONOMA COUNTY WILDLIFE RESOURCE GUIDE

YOUR PETS AND SUMMER HEAT!

by Deborah Hodesson & Avra Tracht, Veterinarians,
All Tails Wagging Veterinary Clinic (formerly Bennett
Valley)

It's hot! And it will probably remain so for some time. Many of you know about the dangers of leaving animals in a car, but there are also other dangers to our pets from being in the sun and heat. Remember cars with windows open a small amount heat up rapidly to excessive temperatures.

Dogs and cats do not have the ability to get rid of body heat by perspiring through their skin. They do not have sweat glands. Their coats actually act as insulation in the heat as well as in the cold. So, as their body temperature rises they must try to regulate it by panting. Now as you can imagine a tongue is not much surface area to dissipate heat compared to human bodies that have sweat glands all over (even though some pets can have enormous slobbery tongues - especially my dog).

Tell tale signs of heat stroke are heavy respiration, weakness, disorientation, bright red mucous membranes, and the skin is hot to touch. A normal temperature for dogs and cats is between 100 F and 102.5 F. If their temperature goes above 105 degrees the body starts a series of actions to try to survive. If this goes on without success in lowering the temperature, it can cascade into irreversible shock and lead to death.

If your pet overheats use cool water or alcohol - especially on their belly and inner hind legs to cool them down. Give water orally in small amounts until their thirst is quenched.

Prevention is the best policy. You can help them by providing shade, rest, and water to drink and even wetting them down with cool water. Dogs can especially overdo easily, when exercising, by having too much fun and getting themselves into trouble. So we need to be aware and make them rest periodically.

Also, remember that animals get sun-induced cancers just like people, especially on the tips of ears and noses. Of course their pink coloration is more susceptible. Use sunblock-hypoallergenic, waterproof, number 40 or above, and reapply often. Keep pets out of midday sun as much as possible.

Enjoy the summer and the outdoors with your pets. Just remember they are not as efficient as we are in dealing with the heat.

As always if you have any questions, feel free to call us at All Tails Wagging Veterinary Clinic, 525-9445.

A pamphlet with this title was created as a community service in 1998, by A. Wills. It has been printed and distributed by Sonoma County Animal Regulation; you can call them at 524-7100 to obtain a free copy. It includes information about both "Wildlife Interaction - First Steps" and a "Quick Reference Guide" with sixteen different agencies or individuals identified who can help you with wildlife. This information is useful to have on hand when needed.

Some of the key agencies identified in this pamphlet are as follows:

Bird Rescue Center* - 707-523-2473 Provides phone information on bird rescue procedure. Rescues and rehabilitates (for re-release) sick, injured or orphaned native wild birds. Public education programs.

Sonoma County Animal Regulation - 707-524-7100 Provides information on deterring and trapping "nuisance" animals... Picks up sick or injured animals and trapped "nuisance" animals for euthanasia (refers to wildlife groups where possible). Accepts small dead animals for disposal (charge for pickup service). Rabies testing.

Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue* - 707-526-9453 (526-wild) Provides phone information on wildlife rescue procedure and ways to deal with "nuisance" wildlife. Cares for and rehabilitates (for re-release) sick, injured, or orphaned mammals and reptiles. Intake and emergency care facility (by apt. only).

Wildlife Center* - 707-575-1000 Rescues and rehabilitates (for re-release) sick, injured, or orphaned birds, mammals and reptiles. Investigates (with focus on solving) threats to wildlife: toxins, habitat destructions, etc. Provides information on deterring "nuisance" wildlife.

Wildlife Fawn Rescue* - 707-833-6727 Provides phone information on rescue procedure for fawns (still spotted), adult deer and western gray squirrels. Cares for and rehabilitates (for re-release) sick, injured or orphaned fawns and squirrels.

Wildlife Interaction... (some of the key points)

● **Orphaned wildlife** -Newborns (especially fawns) may ...just (be) waiting for their parents to return...leave the animal where it is, observe from a distance, restrain any dogs, and call for further instructions.

● **Wildlife Assistance**...Do not attempt to pick up an animal if there is any possibility you may be bitten ... Remember ... rabies... If you must handle an animal, wear thick gloves to prevent disease exposure...Do not give food or water ..

*Non-profit organizations...donations needed & appreciated.

**REPORT ON THE BENNETT VALLEY
HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION (BVHA)
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETINGS;
MAY17th and JUNE 21st, 2000**

**(PLEASE NOTE: THERE WILL NOT BE A BVHA
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING IN AUGUST!)**

The major agenda items discussed at these two meetings are described herein on pages 2 and 3, including the report by the Bennett Valley Common Ground Committee, Bennett Valley Clean-up Day, Bennett Valley Area Plan, the pool of volunteers, Bennett Valley 2000, and the Matanzas Creek Watershed Group.

Other items discussed on May 17th included the Pedestrian/Bike Trail on Grange Road (the County has no money to cover the \$125,000 for this proposed project), the adoption of revised BVHA bylaws, the Bennett Valley 2001 Calendar, Sonoma County Public Works improvements on Bennett Valley Road, repairs to Sonoma Mountain Road Bridge, the BVHA Board vacancy and information about the Rural Heritage Initiative (web site is www.ruralheritage.net).

Another item discussed was the more than twenty duplicate telephone/cable poles in Bennett Valley, where PG&E has put in new power poles. Pacific Bell is responsible for transferring their wires to the new poles and taking down the old poles, but these old poles have been left standing for as long as three years. A spokesman for Pacific Bell stated that the Public Utilities Commission has ordered Pac Bell to remove over 2,000 such poles in Marin & Sonoma County before the end of the year, and they have agreed to put Bennett Valley first on the list. Pac Bell is in the process of selecting a contractor to do the work, so it will be at least 90 days before the work is started.

At the meeting on June 21st, in addition to information already described, the BVHA Board of Directors agreed to write a thank-you letter to Sonoma Co. Public Works for putting up about fifty new reflectors along Bennett Valley Road.

**BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNERS
ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

P.O. Box 2666, Santa Rosa, CA 95405

Bill Sullivan, President (528-6804)

Marilee Jensen, Vice-President & Editor (576-0405)

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Thanks to the BVHA "VOICE" Editing and Mail-Out Committee: Bobbie Blair, Eve Boling (Editor Emeritus), Nancy Dell'Ergo, Suzanne Dougherty, Ralph Gregerson, Peg Longman, Frank Nye, Christina Saffer, Marilyn Stocks and especially Lois Brown, whose work is never-ending.

BVHA Membership & Mailing List -

If you know of any Bennett Valley address changes, Bennett Valley property being sold, or you have membership dues to send in (\$15 annually), please contact Lois Brown at 5145 Burnham Ranch Road, Santa Rosa, 95404, (707) 578-0708. Thanks!

Please feel free to write BVHA or call any of the directors with questions or concerns. You can send e-mail to the Editor at marilee@sprintmail.com. If you want an answer, please indicate.

**BENNETT VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION
DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Wells Wagner, Chairman

Lee O. Liddell, Marie Nottingham, Matt Phillips and Nola Stans. If you have questions or concerns, contact the Fire Chief, Kent Reynolds, at 578-7761

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BENNETT VALLEY COMMUNITY CALENDAR

1. BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION MEETS THE 3RD WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH, 7:30 PM, BENNETT VALLEY FIRE STATION

Dates of next two meetings-July 19th, September 20th. Interested Bennett Valley residents are welcome to attend.

PLEASE NOTE THERE WILL NOT BE A MEETING IN AUGUST.

2. BENNETT VALLEY FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETS THE 2ND TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH, 7:00 PM, BENNETT VALLEY FIRE STATION

Dates of next two meetings - August 8th, September 12th

Interested Bennett Valley residents are welcome to attend.

3. SONOMA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETS EVERY TUESDAY EXCEPT ON WEEKS WHEN THERE IS A HOLIDAY at 575 ADMINISTRATION DRIVE, SANTA ROSA.

Information about the Board of Supervisors agenda, meeting dates or times can be found at www.sonoma/county.ord or you can call 527-2241. Michael J. Cale is the 1st District Supervisor representing the Bennett Valley Area and Sonoma Valley.