



Bennett Valley VOICE

www.bennettvalley.org

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BENNETT VALLEY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION (BVCA)

JULY 2012

Bennett Valley History and Memories By Karen Sommer

Evelyn McClure will be our guest speaker on July 19, Thursday, 7:00 pm at the Bennett Valley Grange Hall, with a special talk about her newly released book, *Beneath the Mountain of the Burning Bird: Bennett Valley History and Memories*. This includes information on the early days of Bennett Valley and the families that first farmed here. This book was compiled and edited by Evelyn S. McClure in collaboration with John P. Talbot and Raymond W. Hillman. A special excerpt from the book is as follows: "*Mike Pardee, writing for the Press Democrat over seventy years ago, wrote that Bennett Valley was "one of those places that once lived in are never forgotten."*"

Evelyn McClure will talk about her book and the process of bringing it to publication. It is filled with the history of the early settlers and memories from their descendents. The book will be available for purchase at this meeting on July 19.

Evelyn was born in Wisconsin and has a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin in theater. She worked at Northwestern University, KGO-TV, Crocker Bank and Wells Fargo Bank before taking early retirement in western Sonoma County. She devotes her time as a volunteer at the Western Sonoma County (W.S.C.) Historical Society and the Sebastopol Center for the Arts. She has published two books on Sebastopol history and collaborated on two other books for the W.S.C. Historical Society.

Also sharing her personal family history in Bennett Valley will be Patty Keiser. Patty's family came to Bennett Valley in the early part of the 20th century. The Keisers played a big part in the early days of agriculture in Bennett Valley.

If you like history and want to know more about "Bennett Valley", this place where we live, you won't want to miss this very special presentation.

Annual Bennett Valley Grange Picnic/BBQ Report, By Karen Sommer

What a difference a year makes! Last year's unseasonable rains made our annual picnic more difficult, but that was not so this year. The weather was perfect for the event on Sunday, June 3. Over 230 people came out to enjoy the activities, and there might have been more, but by 2:40 pm, we had to put out a sign saying, "Sold Out". No more food! Next year we expect to be better prepared for the crowds coming to this annual event.

There were over 65 participants in the Cherry Pit Spitting contest. The longest distance was 50 feet. (Really 50 feet!) Brett Farris and Debbie Abrams from KZST were the official judges. Other activities included a silent auction, wine auction, Emergency Preparedness booth, animals from our 4H group and face painting for the youngest attendees. We had a great display of memorabilia representing the Bennett Valley Grange over the 140 years since its inception in 1873, along with old farming equipment courtesy of Joe Judge. The Bennett Valley fire crew showed off their fire engine for the children. The band was a great draw as well. Evelyn McClure was present to sell the newly published book on Bennett Valley, *Beneath the Mountain of the Burning Bird: Bennett Valley History and Memories*, which she will discuss at the Grange on July 19th and will have it available for purchase.

Thank you to all who helped with the event and those that came to enjoy it. Proceeds for this event will go to the Grange building fund; you'll be able to see new windows on the building in the near future. Also, some of the funds will help with stocking our Emergency Preparedness container at the BV Grange with additional first aid supplies; both worthwhile causes!

Bennett Valley Road Repair Report **for July and August** By Craig Harrison

The part of Sonoma Mountain Road near the Zen Center that has long been exposed dirt will soon be paved, probably during July or August. At the budget hearing on June 25th I asked the board of supervisors to pave this section because it had become an open sore for residents and a hazard for accidents. Supervisors Valerie Brown and David Rabbitt supported my request, and Supervisor Brown's office followed up with an email. The project will entail shaping the crown to shed water and putting on an armor coat (a double 1/2 inch chip seal), which will take a day for preparation and a half day to resurface. The unpaved patch was originally designed as an over-winter demonstration project in autumn 2009 to test an enzyme process that can create a solid road base without oil and concrete. This process might drop by half the cost of reconstructing hundreds of miles of failing roads in Sonoma County. The September 2009 *VOICE* noted that this area had been damaged by the heavy equipment that was used to repair the road closure nearby.

Bennett Valley Road is now part of the Primary Road System (formerly Priority Road System). However, there are currently no plans to overlay asphalt on any parts of Bennett Valley Road this summer, but this might change. During June and early July, the Sonoma County Public Works Department performed some grinding and paving on sections of Crane Canyon Road near the crest where it becomes Grange Road. You will recall that both roads were chip-sealed in their entirety during October 2008. The repair work is needed because the shade in this area, combined with heavy pitch from the trees, did not allow the oil during the chip seal process to adhere well.

Supervisor Brown assures us that she is trying to work out a solution with respect to Jacobs' Ranch Open Space Preserve. The map of the roads (sosroads.org/index.php/road-preservation-a-condition-maps) in Bennett Valley shows that all roads leading to Jacobs' Ranch are in failing condition, including Sonoma Mountain Road between Pressley Road and Warm Springs Road; the half mile of Pressley Road west of Sonoma Mountain Road, and parts of the 2 miles of Sonoma Mountain Road between Pressley Road and Bennett Valley Road. Bill Keene of the Open Space District says that the access roads are the responsibility of Public Works, not the Open Space District. Public Works has no money to rehabilitate these roads, which could be ravaged by equestrian trailers and severely diminish the useful life left for them.

Notice Of BVCA Election

The 2012 BVCA election season is upon us. Members of the BVCA Board of Directors serve for three-year terms at the end of which they may choose to run or not run for re-election for one more term. Terms are ending for three of our current BVCA board members; Gary Barner, Fay Blair, and Tim Bosma.

Anyone interested in joining the BVCA Board of Directors is encouraged to submit a Candidate's Statement to Jean LaCombe, Chair of the BVCA Nominating Committee, by no later than Friday, August 31. Statements should be no longer than 250 words.

Minimum qualifications are: 1) candidate must be a member of good standing in the BVCA, with paid dues current, and 2) have a strong commitment to "promoting and preserving the rural character and natural environment of Bennett Valley." If you are interested but are not yet a member of BVCA, you may join at any time before August 31, simply by submitting your check for \$15 to the BVCA Membership Coordinator, Larissa Goliti. See instructions on Page 7, for both online or mail payments for membership.

**Please mail your Candidate's
Statement to:**

**2012 BVCA ELECTION
ATTN: JEAN LACOMBE
P.O. BOX 2666
SANTA ROSA, CA 95404**

If you prefer to email your statement, please send it to Jean at jeannielacombe@gmail.com. These Candidate Statements will appear in the September BVCA *VOICE*. All voting members of BVCA will be sent an Official Ballot 30 days prior to the annual Election Meeting, scheduled for November 15.

Should you have questions, please contact any of the current board members whose phone numbers appear in each BVCA *VOICE*, on Page 7, or call Jean LaCombe at 585-3482.

Congressman Weighs In On PG&E Tree Cutting. (Meeting Gets Results!)

Excerpts from *Kenwood Press*, July 1, 2012,
reported by Jay Gamel.

The fight (*that began*) between a few homeowners... and utility giant PG&E has escalated to the point that Congressman Mike Thompson (D-1st District) has called on PG&E to work out a plan that provides clearly understood standards for managing vegetation under its high-voltage power lines statewide. At his Napa office on Monday, June 25, Thompson met with members of [Save Our Sonoma Trees](#) (SOS-Trees), a representative from State Assemblyman Michael Allen's (D-7th District) office, and others concerned about PG&E's tree removal program.

"The commitment I was asking for is that everybody come together and figure out how to work together to minimize safety issues for the power lines and maximize keeping the trees," Thompson said in a Wednesday afternoon phone call from Washington, D.C. Thompson was clear that he intends for PG&E to come up with a reasonable tree management policy statewide, and not continue to negotiate with each property owner without clear standards.

"I hope PG&E heard it loud and clear because it was repeated that this was not just about the people at the table or homeowners in Oakmont, but about their plan in the State of California," Thompson said... PG&E's stated policy for "vegetation management" is to "establish a low growing plant community" by "clearing rights-of-way of tall growing and incompatible plant species," according to the company's web pages on vegetation management. This policy is directly at odds with homeowners, environmental groups and public officials who want to retain as many trees as possible while maintaining power line integrity and safety.

At the meeting in Thompson's office, PG&E agreed to meet with members of [Save Our Sonoma Trees](#) (SOS-Trees), a citizen action group, in the next few weeks to begin the process. The group has been meeting weekly... to work out strategies to halt PG&E's plans to remove as many trees as it can underneath its 230 kv high voltage lines throughout California... PG&E's refusal to disclose any set standards for deciding which trees should be removed and which should be trimmed has frustrated everyone trying to protect their trees.

Emery Dann, a certified arborist and member of SOS-Trees, who met this month with PG&E representatives and north county supervisor, Mike McGuire, at Shiloh Park, rejected PG&E's assertions that wholesale tree removal was necessary to protect line safety.

"They have been uncooperative about putting in writing exactly what their standards are and when a tree has to be removed or when it can be trimmed," Dann said. "What SOS-Trees wants is for every tree (*species*) to be individually considered for trimming. PG&E is not willing to consider differences within species that they call incompatible. The only compatible vegetation PG&E wants would be grass, poison oak, blackberries, Toyons and Manzanita." Dann also noted that grasslands are a far greater fire danger than trees that are well under the danger zone. "The problem we've had all along is that we've wanted them to come out with a

standardized, minimum air gap between trees and power lines, but what we're getting is whatever can be negotiated with each individual....," said Herman Hess, Oakmont ..."

June 26, 2012, Greetings, Mike McGuire, Supervisor, 4th District

Thank you for your concern and interest in Shiloh Regional Park tree preservation... You saw the incompatible plans PG&E has for this sensitive area of our county... Yesterday, six of us from S.O.S. trees and six in the upper management of PG&E along with a representative for Michael Allen, Assemblyman, met for 2 hours with Mike Thompson in Napa. The meeting turned out in our favor. PG&E admitted their past mistakes and miscommunication. They were clearly uncomfortable with our concerns about what they plan to do this year and in the future. I believe we got their attention. They definitely do not want this to spill over into a public outcry...They want to meet with us in two weeks...While it is an uphill battle, PG&E needs to be stopped from irreparably harming our Sonoma County environmental resources, going way beyond what is reasonable to keep the transmission lines safe... Sincerely, Emery Dann, I.S.A. Certified Arborist #WE850A, I.S.A. Certified Tree Risk Assessor P.N.W. #1040

July 5, 2012, Mike McGuire meeting: PG&E was again on the "hot seat!"

We met for 2 hours Thursday morning with 4 employees from PG&E~including Eric Brown. Mike McGuire, Cheryl Diehm, Robert Philips, Bert Whitaker, Park Manager (Shiloh and Annadel), 2 leaders from Open Space, and myself, Emery Dann, were also present. Eric Brown kept repeating Shiloh was only routine maintenance as in the past. Mike countered over and over saying that the new plans for Shiloh were far more aggressive than what has previously been done. After an hour and a half, Eric finally admitted that Shiloh Regional Park is included in the *same plan* as "Southern Sonoma County"-- the 39 miles from Petaluma to the Geysers and elsewhere. This was a major admission as to what they are doing and where they are going with tree removal...

Also it was brought up about the sensitive nature of the ecology, habitat, slope, and terrain issues, along with erosion and getting an EIR... I will e-mail (*PG&E representatives*) Bob Bell, Eric Brown, and Martinez to confront their thinking. We heard them repeat the company words and policy over and over again. If they say it enough times they think everyone will believe them...Deception... (*We*) do not agree with PG&E's plan for extensive removals at Shiloh. PG&E was obviously very uncomfortable and defensive in their responses...! We need to continue to hold PG&E accountable for their drastic change in policy and their lethal, environmental damaging actions and cavalier attitudes. Emery Dann

ALERT: PG&E has multiple large three foot plus diameter redwood trees, marked for removal at the east side of Coopers Grove within 15 feet of Sonoma Mountain Road. These trees, marked with red ribbons, will be removed if there is not enough public outcry. Please make your voice heard by going to the sos-trees.org site and find the way to make the comment, "Trim, NOT Remove", so we can publish and forward your request to the correct PG&E representative. By James Casciani, SOS Trees

A Thousand Miles Of Bad Road

Road Maintenance Budget Triples But Sonoma County Remains In a Deep Pot Hole

By Craig S. Harrison, SOSroads.org

On the first of May, a member of Save Our Sonoma Roads struck a pot hole that deployed an air bag and caused \$3,000 in damages to her vehicle. She was driving 25 mph, well below the speed limit. The Board of Supervisors hearing on June 19th that discussed the comprehensive 31-page road report by the Ad Hoc Committee provides little reason to believe that damaging encounters with pot holes will cease any time soon.

The good news is that the county maintenance budget, which was merely \$5.3 million this year, will almost triple to \$15.5 million in the fiscal year beginning July 1st. This returns the county's contribution for road maintenance from its general fund, adjusted for inflation, to the levels it spent in the late 1980s. The decisions by supervisors for over 20 years to divert road maintenance funds to projects that seemed more interesting to them have reduced Sonoma County roads to their current abysmal condition. Had road maintenance funding been maintained at an equivalent of \$15 million per year during that period, the additional \$120 million would surely have resulted in most county roads being in much better condition today.

SOSroads suggested at its first Road Summit in March that returning funding to \$15 million would demonstrate that the Board of Supervisors is serious about making roads a priority. They delivered, and we congratulate Supervisors Zane and Rabbitt for their leadership on the Ad Hoc Road Committee, resulting in this marked change.

The additional \$2.2 million from Solid Waste Franchise Fees, approved in February, allows the county to expand its Priority Road Network (now renamed the Primary Road Network) to 198 miles and includes all of Bennett Valley Road. The additional \$8 million, approved June 19th, comes from a special reserve used to cover delinquent property taxes and will not be available in subsequent years.

Most of the one-time funds (\$6.5 million) will be used to rehabilitate 7.6 miles of rural roads that serve tourist destinations -- West Dry Creek Road (wineries), Westshore Road (Bodega Harbor), Adobe Canyon Road (Sugarloaf Ridge State Park) and Cannon Lane (Tolay Regional Park).

Many members of the public who spoke at the hearing welcomed the additional funds but wondered whether these 7.6 miles of road are the highest priority, especially because they appear to be in comparatively good shape and not necessarily deserving of \$855,000 per mile. What might be achieved by rehabilitating smaller sections (e.g., one-quarter mile or less) of the worst stretches of roads throughout the county? There are many roads with a bad reputation

because of a few very deteriorated 100 yard segments.

The remaining \$1.5 million of the one-time funds will be used to match citizen efforts to improve roads. This is a creative idea, and SOSroads volunteered to help implement the program in a practical way that would inspire public confidence.

It is frustrating that an \$8 million major step forward will merely improve 7.6 miles of roads together with what can be accomplished from partnerships with the community.

There is no specific long term plan to address the repair of the majority of the county's failing roads. The county has 1,382 miles of roads and most of the 1,184 that are not in the Primary Road System receive no attention except to address immediate safety problems.

What will happen to the 726 miles of county roads (53%) that are now classified as poor or failed? The report estimates it will take \$92.6 million each year to repair them. Ken Churchill of New Sonoma (<http://www.newsonoma.org/>), a prominent pension reform advocate, stressed the connection between county pensions and the road crisis. The amount needed to repair the roads is almost equal to the amount the county is obligated to pay out of the general fund for pensions each year.

The report identifies four local tax increases that might increase road funding. In the unlikely event that all were approved by voters, the annual sum raised (\$10 million) would barely scratch the surface of the \$92.6 million problem. These include a local 0.25 cent sales tax increase (\$3.5 million), a hotel tax increase (\$2.5 million), extending Measure M (\$0.6 million) and a utility users tax (\$3.4 million). Special property tax assessments where some residents agree to assess themselves to pay extra to improve nearby roads remains an option.

Additional funding could come from statewide vehicle fee and/or gas tax increases, both of which require statewide voter approval or legislation. This gas tax allocation formula disadvantages Sonoma County and needs revision, but the current formula provides plenty of funds to other counties that are not eager to redirect funding to Sonoma County from their own coffers.

SOSroads urges those concerned about the condition of our rural roads to get involved in this issue. While the supervisors emphatically state that there is no formal policy to convert 86% of county roads to gravel or dirt, the county is continuing in that direction without substantial additional funding.

Please join SOSroads or sign up for our free newsletter (<http://sosroads.org/>) so that we update you on developments.

Bennett Valley Fire Protection District
(BVFPD) 6161 Bennett Valley Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95404
Phone: 578-7761 website: bennettvalleyfire.org

Board of Directors:

Mark Richardson, President; Joseph Mazeau, Vice-President;
Marilee Jensen, Secretary;

Don D'Avanzo and Arnie Tognozzi, Directors.

*Board meetings are held on the second Tuesday each month,
7:00 pm, at the BV Fire Station. Please confirm meeting date
ahead of time by calling 823-1084.*

Bennett Valley Paid Firefighting Staff.

Interim Fire Chief: Darrin De Carli, 823-5502

48-hour Personnel: Lieutenant Matt Tognozzi, Engineers
Travis Browne and Rene Torres

Daytime Firefighters, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm:

Engineers: Ronnie Lakin, Patrick Tognozzi,

Firefighters: Mike Alcocer, Derrick Alvestal,
Ly Leng, and Jon Matej

Bennett Valley Volunteer Firefighters

*There are about 29 BV Firefighters, including the volunteers.
Three rotating shifts of three volunteers each are paid a
stipend to sleep overnight at the Fire Station, for improved
coverage. During the day, interns are used, at no cost when
available, allowing the fire station to have the ideal fourth on-
duty firefighter on those particular days.*

Bennett Valley Fire Protection District

By Lieutenant Matt Tognozzi

Call Log; May/June, 2012

Structure Fire – 3	Vehicle Fire – 0
Grass Fire – 5	Medical Aid – 25
Vehicle Accident – 8	Public Assist – 3
Strike Team – 0	Other Type Call – 12
Total Calls – 56	

Equipment Use Safety

Are You doing the right thing, the wrong way?

For example, are you trying to eliminate the fire hazards around your home and in the process starting a wildland fire? Each year Cal Fire responds to more than 1,600 fires started by Californians using equipment the wrong way.

Whether working to create a defensible space around your home, just mowing the lawn, or pulling your motorized dirt bike over to the side of the road, if you live in a wildland area you need to use all equipment responsibly. Lawn mowers, weed eaters, chain saws, grinders, welders, tractors, and trimmers can all spark a wildland fire. Do your part, the right way, to keep your community fire safe.

Here's how to do it the *Right Way*:

- Do all yard maintenance that requires a gas or electrical motor before 10:00 am; **not in the heat of the day, or when the wind is blowing!**
- Lawn mowers are designed to mow lawns. **Never** use lawn mowers in dry vegetation.
- Use a weed trimmer to cut down dry weeds and grass.
- Remove rocks in the area before you begin operating any equipment. A rock hidden in grass or weeds is enough to start a fire when struck by a metal blade.
- In wildland areas, spark arresters are required on all portable gasoline powered equipment including tractors,

harvesters, chain saws, weed trimmer, mowers, motorcycles, and All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs).

- Keep the exhaust system, spark arresters and mower in proper working order and free of carbon buildup. Use the recommended grade of fuel and don't top off.
- Keep the engine free of oil and dust, and keep the mower free of flammable materials.
- In wildland areas, a permit may be required for grinding and welding operations, and spark shields may be required on equipment. Be sure to have 10 feet of clearance, a 46" round point shovel, and a back pump water-type fire extinguisher ready to use.
- Hot exhaust pipes and mufflers can start fires you won't even see, until it's too late! **Don't pull your vehicle off into dry grass or brush.**
- Keep a cell phone nearby and call 911 **immediately** in case of a fire.

Access to Agendas and Approved Minutes For Bennett Valley Fire Protection District (BVFPD)

Members of the public can request the meeting agenda to be emailed to them 72 hours before the board meeting or they may pick up a copy of the agenda at the BV fire station 72 hours before the meeting. Complete minutes from the previous month's meeting will be available to the public after board approval, either by picking them up at the next Board meeting, or requesting a copy be mailed to them. Please make these requests to the Bennett Valley Fire District bookkeeper, Kori Lantow, by email, klantow@comcast.net, at the BV Fire Board of Directors meeting or by telephone, 823-1084. Below are the highlights of the approved minutes for three board meetings, edited by Marilee Jensen.

• **Highlights of BV Fire Board Meeting, April 17**

BENNETT VALLEY/GOLD RIDGE MOU (Memorandum Of Understanding) : Brian Elliot, the consultant hired by the BV Fire Board, reported that out of the eight requests for proposals sent out, only two proposals were received; Gold Ridge Fire and Sonoma County Fire Services Department. Gold Ridge's price was \$96,500. Sonoma County's price was \$85,000 with a clerical option of \$45,000. The Board stated that they are not interested in the County doing the clerical work...The two agencies plan to give presentations at the May board meeting. The Board will be able to ask questions.

• **Highlights of BV Fire Board Meeting, May 8**

Andy Pforsich introduced Darrin DeCarli as the Interim Bennett Valley Fire Chief. He explained that a PERS retirement rule made him step down from the permanent position of Fire Chief. BENNETT VALLEY/GOLD RIDGE MOU: Each of the agencies who responded to the RFP's, that is Sonoma County Fire Services Department (first) and Gold Ridge Fire District (second) made a presentation and answered questions about their proposed management services. (*Actual minutes have a lot more detail.*) Next, Directors Jensen and Tognozzi volunteered to be on the budget committee for the 2012/2013 fiscal year, beginning 7/1/12, and to attend the budget committee meeting on June 13, at the BV Fire Station.

• **Highlights of BV Fire Board Meeting, June 19**

The Fire Board voted four to one to select Gold Ridge Fire Protection District to provide management services for Bennett Valley Fire Protection District. After this decision, the regular meeting was suspended at 8:05 pm and a public hearing began, to present information on the preliminary budget and the tax rate for the next fiscal year. The tax rate was set by the Board at \$180 for the year. The audit report for the 2010/2011 year was distributed to the Board for the next meeting.

YOU DECIDE...

(Not edited, by request)

Despite the recommendation of an independent analyst, despite an overwhelming vote by the fire fighters, and despite the higher cost to Bennett Valley tax payers, the Bennett Valley Fire Protection District Board (BVFPD Board) voted to award Gold Ridge Fire Protection District (GRFPD), located near Sebastopol, a new contract.

In January of this year, BVFPD Board voted unanimously to hire Fire and Emergency Services Consulting (FESC) for the purposes of preparing and managing a professional services agreement 'Request for Proposal (RFP) for the district. The BVFPD Board further agreed to pay Brian Elliot \$3,000 to provide these professional services and to make a recommendation. This was a solicitation for bids to manage the BVFPD and provide a Fire Chief.

Two RFPs were received and evaluated and rated using FESCs Evaluation Criteria. The County of Sonoma Fire Services Department (CSFSD) scored a total of twenty-six (26) out of a possible thirty points while GRFPD received a total of twenty-four (24) points.

Gold Ridge FPD submitted a cost of \$96,500 for their proposed contract services. County of Sonoma FSD submitted a cost of \$85,000 for their proposed contract services, 13.52% below that of Gold Ridge.

The Fire Fighter Association voted overwhelmingly, with a vote of 15 - 9, to leave Gold Ridge in favor of changing to the County of Sonoma Fire Services.

After the selection of one or the other competing bids, the BVFPD Board is allowed to further negotiate the terms of the successful proposal. These negotiations cannot occur before the bid is awarded. From the BVFPD Boards discussion on the night of June 19, 2012, it appears that Gold Ridge reduced the amount of it's bid to \$90,000 prior to the vote to award either bid by the BVFPD Board. Marilee Jensen assured Darrin DeCarli, the Board, and the audience the \$90,000 figure was already reflected in the new Fiscal year budget. Ms. Jensen's comments were made prior to any vote by the Board to award a bid.

The BVFPD Board opted to award a new contract to Gold Ridge on June 19, 2012, with a vote of 4-1, thereby ignoring the concerns from the Fire Fighters, overall costs and the degree of the highly experienced management team from County Of Sonoma Fire Services and the additional depth of resources that would be available to the BVFPD from an agency that actually adjoins the BVFPD boundaries. The CSFSD Chief has over nine years of experience managing a fire district with five full time fire stations and more than 70 full time personnel, compared to the interim Chief from Gold Ridge who has three years experience as Battalion Chief. The BVFPD Board effectively agreed to pay more money for less experienced management and resources.

Do you feel you have been fairly represented by this decision?

David & Debbie Larriou, David Witwicki, Sandy Jordan,
Dr. & Mrs. Thomas L. Engel, Jean LaCombe, Darell
Furr, Mr. & Mrs. Don Parker, Gordon Endow

The BVFPD Board of Directors Renews the Gold Ridge Management MOU,

June 19, 2012

The BVFPD Board of Directors issued a request for proposals (RFP) for the BVFPD Management Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) currently contracted to the Gold Ridge Fire District. Two official proposals were received, one from the Gold Ridge Fire District (GRFPD) and one from the County of Sonoma Fire Services Department (CSFSD). After extensive evaluation of both proposals and with the best interests of the entire Bennett Valley Community as the primary objective, the Board voted four to one on June 19th to renew the contract with Gold Ridge.

The major reasons for four of the Board members' decision to renew the Gold Ridge MOU include:

- 1) The BVFPD has maintained the contract with GRFPD for 14 years during which time all aspects of the BV Fire Protection District have been well managed. BVFPD has no direct experience with CSFSD management.
- 2) The County admitted more than once that their bid was lower than their costs and insisted on a three year contract. These facts, in conjunction with the County's tenuous financial status, would put CSFSD's ability to meet commitments in the contract in question. In contrast, the contract with GRFPD can be terminated with only six months notice.
- 3) The contract with GRFPD also results in a combined employee pool between the two districts, which has provided financial and operational benefit and stability to Bennett Valley. The County is not able to do this because they manage only volunteer firefighter companies.
- 4) The GRFPD management has demonstrated support of Bennett Valley community interests such as fund raising for the emergency communication center, weed abatement, CERT support, etc.
- 5) It was uncertain how involved CSFSD Duty Chiefs could be in day to day operations at BV, with their resources spread over fifteen volunteer companies throughout the county, including Sea Ranch.
- 6) The CSFSD is not currently operating another permanent fire station such as BVFPD. As Chief Mark Aston stated in his presentation at the BV Fire Board meeting on May 8, CSFSD does not have a firehouse and the Fire Chiefs in his office would be responding from their homes after hours. Unlike GRFPD, the CSFSD cannot offer strike team opportunities which provide BVFPD firefighters valuable experience and overtime wages as well as providing an additional revenue stream for the district.

Don D'Avanzo
Marilee Jensen
Joseph Mazeau

Bennett Valley Community Association

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bill@williamfinkelstein.com Any questions about the BVCA website can be directed to Bill Finkelstein.

JOINING THE BVCA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

If anyone is interested in being on the BVCA Board of Directors, you can follow the procedure described on Page 2 for the upcoming election or you can always contact any of the board members to express your interest, which we would welcome!

BVCA MEMBERSHIP DUES, 2012

If you haven't yet sent in your dues for 2012, the annual dues are \$15 plus any additional contribution you want to make (these contributions to BVCA may now be tax-deductible). You may either send in your check to BVCA, P.O. Box 2666, Santa Rosa, CA 95405, or pay online with a credit card or PayPal account. To pay online, go to www.bennettvalley.org (our BVCA website), then choose from the menu on the left side of the first page "Join/Renew: BVCA Membership", and follow the instructions. If you have any questions, please call Larissa Goliti at 578-3453.

BVCA Membership Disclosure Policy

It has been adopted by the Bennett Valley Community Association (BVCA) that the mailing lists, both U.S. Postal and electronic, of BVCA membership are confidential within the limitations of applicable local, state, federal and/or international law. BVCA will not sell or otherwise distribute its lists of BVCA member names, usernames, email addresses, or any other related information it may have collected for any purpose outside the normal course of business of the BVCA. The term "normal course of business" may include providing such member lists to public safety and service organizations. The purpose of this policy is

to prevent outside organizations and/or online solicitors and others from violating the privacy of BVCA members.

Brief Summary, BVCA Minutes

May 17, 2012 Meeting

- Use of BVCA Mailing List, see above.
- BVEP Report, Will have a booth at the Grange picnic. Outside help was encouraged. If you're interested in joining the Grange, contact Marilee Jensen, VOICE Editor.
- Discussed Road Issues. The County Budget Hearings will be important for road issues.
- Update, PG&E Tree Clearing. Stream protection may protect some additional trees.
- Speakers for future meetings. Suggestions included BV History, Geology and Gaye LeBaron. Karen Sommer will contact Ms. LeBaron.
- Larissa Goliti asked Bennett Valley Fire Protection Board member, Marilee Jensen, about the recent resignation of Fire Chief Andy Pforsich, resulting from PERS retirement rules.

Board of Directors' Tentative Agenda

Thursday, July 19, 7:00 pm, BV Grange Hall

- Announcements and Public Input
- Approval of Minutes
- Treasurer's Report and Spending Requests
- Follow-up on changing name to BVCA
- Bi-Monthly County Reports: Board of Supervisors, Open Space District, PRMD, Public Works,
- Report from Bennett Valley Emergency Preparedness Committee
- Road Issues
- PG&E Tree Clearing
- Board Election
- Speaker for September Meeting
- New Business as Determined by the Board
- Adjourn

Herding Dog Rescue Needs

Foster Homes

We are a 501(c) (3), non-profit rescue organization in Bennett Valley that is in desperate need of foster homes for our dogs. The bad economy has caused an unprecedented number of dogs to be abandoned or surrendered. The shelters are packed and are euthanizing healthy, good dogs every day. To enable us to save more lives, we are seeking foster people, who have dog experience, and can house and provide care for a dog we rescue -- even if it's only for a few days or weeks. The majority of the dogs we rescue are cattle dogs/healers, border collies and herding mixes, ranging from 20 to 50 lbs. If you have a place in your home and your heart for a foster dog, please contact Herd It Through The Grapevine at (707) 583-9583 or email us at doghouse@hittgv.org. Thank you! Debbie Enge

Bennett Valley Community Association
P.O. Box 2666
Santa Rosa, CA 95405

www.bennettvalley.org

PURPOSES OF BVCA: *To promote and preserve the residential rural character and natural environment of Bennett Valley; To educate, instruct, train and inform the local residents on disaster preparedness and emergency response as well as local land use and environmental issues; to serve as an open forum for Bennett Valley community participation; and to provide a bridge for communication between government agencies and the Bennett Valley community.*

Return Service Requested

Inside You'll Find

- Bennett Valley Road Repair
- BVCA Election Notice
- PG&E Tree Cutting; Meeting with Congressman Mike Thompson Gets Results
- A Thousand Miles of Bad Roads: SOS Roads
- BV Fire Protection District; Equipment Use Safety
- BV Fire District; Highlights of Minutes
- BV Fire Board's Recent Decision Re: Gold Ridge
- BVCA Board, Summary of Minutes, Agenda
- Foster Homes Needed For Rescue Dogs

Bennett Valley Community Calendar

Mark your calendars now!!

- **Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association:** The next meeting is Thursday, July 19, 7:00 pm, BV Grange Hall. See Tentative Agenda on Page 7.
- **Bennett Valley Fire Protection District:** The Board of Directors meets the second Tuesday of each month, 7:00 pm, at the Bennett Valley Fire Station. Please call 823-1084 to confirm meeting date ahead of time.
- **13th Annual Art On The Ridge;** Artists' Open Studios, September 22-23, noon to 5:00 pm. See September VOICE.
- **Bennett Valley Grange Spaghetti Dinner,** Saturday, September 22, 5:00 to 8:00 pm. A fund raiser for the upkeep of the Grange Building. More information in September VOICE
- **Bennett Valley ARTrails Open Studio Celebrating 26 Years - October 13, 14, 20, 21** –See September VOICE.
- **Amateur Radio (Ham Radio) Licensing In Just One Day:** (From website [smrs](http://smrs.org)) Below are the dates set for the one day licensing classes and exams. Saturdays, July 21, September 15, Petaluma Senior Center. Cram session, 9:00 am - \$10, Exam session, 1:00 pm, \$15. Please pre-register in order to get help with obtaining your Federal Registration Number. Contact Dale, 762-0414 or wb6tms@arrl.net.
- **Sonoma County Board Of Supervisors:** Meets every Tuesday (except weeks when there is a legal holiday), at varying times, 575 Administration Drive, Santa Rosa. Valerie Brown is the Supervisor for our First District. You may call her or her District Director, Jennifer Hainstock, at 565-2241, if you have any concerns.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

- For emergencies, use your landline or your cell phone to call **911**.
- To talk to someone at the Sheriff's office 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to either report concerns that may be an emergency or to discuss a situation that may require law enforcement response, call 565-2121.
- Call Sonoma County Road Maintenance, at 565-5100 to report dangerous potholes, fallen trees or landslides and to request possible help with litter control and bulk trash in the road.
- Call Sonoma County Animal Control, at 565-7100, regarding the removal of dead animals along the road.
- Call California Highway Patrol, at 588-1400, as another resource if debris is causing imminent traffic hazards on county roads.