June 2020 Volume 2 Issue 6

Colfax Connections

Admin. Law Judge Sides With City In {Colfax v. CalPERS}

By wstockwin@hughes.net

The May 13 Colfax City Council meeting opened with City Attorney, Mick Cabral, characterizing the recent Administrative Law Judgment (ALJ) in {Colfax v. CalPERS} as a "complete win for the City. She found every fact and every issue in favor of the City and Laurie," Cabral said.

At issue was the state's contention that Laurie VanGronigen, the City Finance Director, was not a consultant but actually a full-time employee, which would require her and the City to make retroactive contributions to the state retirement fund (CalPERS) dating back to 2015.

A quiet Memorial Day morning in Colfax with flags fluttering in a light breeze. Photo by wstockwin@ hughes.net. More photos page 8.

"She found every fact and every issue in favor of the City and Laurie," Cabral said.

The state's claim was based on an initial complaint made on September 19, 2017 by former City employee, Travis Berry.

After receiving additional information from the City in late 2017, CalPERS issued a preliminary determination on April 16, 2018 that it found VanGroningen to be a common law, full-time employee eligible for CalPERS membership on July 1, 2015. The City opposed that finding in May 2018, and then appealed the final decision of CalPERS in September that year.

The City Attorney said that before reaching its decision CalPERS never bothered to interview either VanGroningen, the target of the initial complaint, or Berry, the initial complainant.

"If the City had lost, it would have had to pay its share of CalPERS contributions retroactive to July 1, 2015, and Laurie would have had to pay her share retroactive to July 1, 2015," Cabral said.

"Both the City and Laurie would have had to continue making contributions going forward until Laurie was no longer working for the City. Overall, it would have significantly increased the City's cost of filling the position of Finance Director."

The appeal process included two days of live hearings in front of an independent Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) in November and December

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The Mayor's Corner

Mayor Marnie Mendoza

We are living in a time of increased uncertainty and through these last four years I have watched all of you push through adversity in your own lives as well as here in our community.

As a member of the Colfax City Council, and now as the city's Mayor, I have been with you since your freshman year. I am honored to have shared your triumphs in State Championships, football, boys baseball, girls basketball and National Choir, all while you were also keeping academics first. You are accomplished scholars, as well as being winning athletes.

This generation stood strong while weathering unexpected challenges: the 2017 Oroville Dam crisis, the 2018 Paradise Fire, 2019 PSPS Wildfire prevention power blackouts, and now a COVID-19 pandemic that has turned our world upside down.

There will be more adversity in your lives, but I am sure that this generation has what it will take to succeed no matter what the future may hold. The strong values that you have learned and embraced in school and as citizens of Colfax will be the foundation for the rest of your lives.

I applaud the 2020 graduating class and wish you all the best. Never forget what you have accomplished here in Colfax, as we will not forget you.

I want to be sure that everyone knows that Placer County has issued Phase 2 guidelines for a partial reopening of businesses in the county. I encourage everyone to follow these guidelines closely. Colfax is doing great with no CV infections so far and we need to keep that going.

We're not done with COVID-19 yet, so stay safe.

Mayor Marnie Mendoza with 2020 graduating seniors back when they were sophomores.

Placer Supervisors Seek Permission For Phase 3 Reopening

Pointing to Placer County's success at flattening the COVID-19 curve and the proactive efforts of the local business community to prepare for safely reopening, the county Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a resolution to request permission from the state to move into Stage 3 of California's reopening roadmap.

The resolution asks for the state to allow reopening of Stage 3 businesses in Placer County such as nail salons, gyms, lodging for tourism and entertainment venues - with adaptations and limits on size of gatherings. It also requests that youth sports and programs be allowed to resume.

Acknowledging the significance of the summer season for Placer's tourism-based economy in eastern Placer County, the resolution asks for specific flexibility to reopen for tourism no later than June 1 and for the state to provide reopening guidance for the industry.

"Businesses just trying to keep employees to help pay their bills and put food on the table for their families," said District 5 Supervisor Cindy Gustafson. "I'm not supporting this because of economic gains or county revenues. This is about community members who are dramatically suffering. Some of our small business people are losing everything they've worked their whole lives for."

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Colfax Connections is a monthly city publication edited by Will Stockwin, who can be contacted via e-mail at **wstockwin@hughes.net.** All submissions are welcome, the earlier the better.
Deadline is the 20th of the previous month.

STAFF
Photography – Alan Shuttleworth
Proofreading – LindaLou Haines

Copies of Colfax Connections can be found at City Hall, the Library, and the Heritage Museum.

Digital copies can also be found on the Chamber's Website at (www.ColfaxChamber.com) and on the City's Website at (www.colfax-ca.gov).

Business Briefs . . .

. . . with LindaLou Haines

Some months back I mentioned a new company moving into the former Crispin Cider brewery at 1213 S. Auburn St. The new company is up and running now and making a splash in the "overlanding" world. The new brand developed by Be Change, LLC is Nimbl Vehicles "Freedom to Roam" expedition truck campers. The Evolution is the Nimbl model being built here in Colfax.

NIMBL camper mounted on Ford 350. For more information go to www. nimblvehicles.com.

President Judd Newman states: "Nimbl's purpose is to fill the chasm between small campers and large expedition vehicles." He added that it meets the needs of the "overlanding" community, because of its being designed on a one-ton scale to mesh with a Ford F350 or other similar-rated pick-ups. The unibody of carbon fiber and fiberglass creates a cabin with nautical styling in its blood, so it is very sleek but tough. Although sleek for driving performance, the pop-up capability when in the field creates an amazing habitable space.

Why did the Nimbl factory set up shop here in Colfax while the Be Change LLC corporate office remains in Las Vegas? Well, much of the talent is here, including Adam Morton, business partner, investor and wearer of many hats in the organization. Oh, yea, Adam owns the Colfax Theater too.

Founder and chief engineer is Jon Turner, who spends time in Colfax. Newman is based here in Colfax now.

Open At Last, Open At Last, Grandma C's Is Open At Last

Cyndee Schwartz, masked and open for business. Photo by Alan Shuttleworth.

What is up with Grandma C's Kitchen & Bakery at 30 N. Main? It is open on a limited basis now: Wednesday through Saturday, 8 to 3. Cyndee Schwartz is serving her own baked goodies: breads, pastries, cakes, cookies, muffins, pies and lots more. Plus, she has espresso and speciality teas. Keep in mind that rules related to COVID-19 do limit the number of patrons at one time. So, be courteous and wait your turn. https://www.facebook.com/GrandmaCKitchen/; 512-5047.

This column devotes its space to new businesses and existing businesses with a new offering or service. Contact me at lindalouhaines14@gmail.com.

City Council Approves New Stop Signs For Forest Hill St.

By wstockwin@hughes.net

The recently finished engineering study and review for additional traffic control on Forest Hill St. will result in some new signage, as well as changing the location of at least one stop sign and removal of another. The study and review were initiated by a request from council member Joe Fatula.

The study commenced with a search of accident record systems to determine any history of accidents in the study area. The two record systems that were searched – TIMS (Traffic Injury Mapping System) and SWITRS (Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System) revealed no reportable or injury accidents occurred in the area during the time frame of 2013-2018.

Potential evaluation and report preparation costs were minimized with a dual approach that used Google Earth street views, followed up by an actual field review to verify that conditions had not changed since the Google images were made.

The city engineer, Larry Wing, said the cost for the study and review was $2,000.

Analysis of the study's findings produced the following recommendations:

• Intersections where traffic control should be installed:

1. Marvin Street and S. Forest Hill St.: install a westbound Stop sign on the Marvin St. approach to supplement the existing eastbound Stop control.

2. S. Forest Hill St. and E. Church St.: Due to visibility issues, install Yield signs on both the northbound and southbound S. Forest Hill approaches.

3. S. Forest Hill St. and Oak Street: Install Stop signs on both the northbound and southbound approaches to this intersection.

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The Forest Hill St. study area, bounded by S.Auburn St. to the west, and by Highway 174 to the east.

Map courtesy of Colfax City Hall

Colfax Chamber of Commerce Notes and Events

Let me introduce myself to all of you: my name is David Johnson and I very proud to be the current president of the Colfax Area Chamber of Commerce.

Several people in Colfax asked me if I would get involved in the Chamber. So, involved I am. My claim to fame is that I have been in the field announcer's booth for the Colfax High School Falcons since 1989. I am very proud of the nickname I was given many years ago, "The Voice of the Colfax Falcons" and the Colfax Junior Falcons Football Teams.

I am a realtor with United Country Real Estate | California Properties, selling real estate primarily in Placer, Nevada and Sacramento Counties. But enough about me. How are you, the residents of Colfax, the businessmen and businesswomen of Colfax doing and how are your businesses doing? Do we all understand the changing stages of the county's play to re-open Placer County and how they affect each of us?

I want to assure you that the Colfax Area Chamber of Commerce is a link between you, the City of Colfax, and Placer County. Do you need financial assistance? Are you in need of food, medical supplies, or other necessary items to be picked up and delivered to your home? Do you have any legal questions or concerns? Are you concerned about your commercial, home, or vehicle insurance needs?

Many if not all of the Colfax area restaurants are open, allowing limited seating and for takeout. More and more the businesses are opening as permitted. Please follow the rules that they have for safety. Please shop local whenever you can. Let's all support each other. We can get through this together.

Please contact your Colfax Area Chamber of Commerce at: colfaxareachamber@gmail.com, 530-346-8888. Or on our Website: www.Colfaxchamber.com, or our Colfax Area Chamber of Commerce Facebook. We have many resources available to us. Plus, we are very fortunate to have over 100 businesses, non-profit organizations and associate members we can refer you to. We are constantly being given information by Placer County via the county's Web page, www.placer.ca.gov, and then clicking on the 'Reopen Placer' link.

David Johnson
CACC President

Gratitude For Our Retiring Board President, Tim Ryan

A huge thanks to outgoing president TIM RYAN for all he has done as Chamber of Commerce President. He made a big difference.

Examples of his many accomplishments: Tim started the popular monthly Coffee and Conversation gatherings. Plus, we saw an enormous growth in our membership.

The Chamber and its members wish to acknowledge the countless hours and behind the scenes work that Tim did that benefited the Chamber. It is because of that hard work that the Chamber is as strong as it is today.

Thank you, Tim!

Submitted by Amy Andrews, Executive Director, Colfax Area Chamber of Commerce

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2019, before the judge issued her decision in the City's favor on March 23 this year.

Cabral noted that ALJ decisions are not binding; they are proposed, recommended decisions that are presented to the CalPERS Board for acceptance or rejection.

If the full CalPERS Board had rejected the decision, the City would have had to sue CalPERS in Sacramento County Superior Court. Cabral said that could have dragged on for at least three years and cost many tens of thousands of dollars.

Instead, CalPERS opted to settle. It agreed to vacate its erroneous final determination, deem VanGroningen an independent contractor and end its dispute with Colfax.

It should also be noted that, after dragging the City through the administrative legal process over what turned out to be an unwarranted complaint, CalPERS is not obligated to reimburse any of the City's legal fees and costs.

City Manager Wes Heathcock said the City's legal defense costs stood at $43,195 before any additional costs to wrap-up the settlement agreement, which he estimated would bring the total bill to around $45,000.

SIERRA VISTA CENTER

June 13th 8:30 to 3 pm

Large parking lot yard sale

to benefit buying a camera surveillance set up for the center.

We would appreciate you saving up some garage sale items to donate to the sale.

Drop off -Monday or Friday 11-1pm or call 346-8726

We will make it a special event with a bar-b-que & photo show: "Life During the Coronavirus Shutdown"

Up to 3 photos can be submitted. If they are printed, they must be 8" by 10" in an 11" by 14" mat. Please include entrants name, contact info, and photo title on the back. If the entrant has no way to get photos printed, they can be e-mailed by June 2 to SVC. SVC will get them printed.
Photos must be taken during the shutdown time. The deadline for submittal to the SVC office will be June 12th if they are matted and ready to show. No entry fees or age limit. The Show will be held outside at SVC on second level.

Let's make this a fun day!

We are looking for some sponsors and committee help.
Call 530 346- 8726 email svcc@colfaxnet.org
office answering machine number is 530-346-8626
Can mail in money donation to:
SVC PO Box 57, Colfax CA 95713

Stop Signs from page 5

• One location where the existing traffic control device required modifications:

1. Marvin Street and S. Forest Hill St. eastbound: The existing Stop sign is located on the wrong side of the approach; it needs to be relocated.

• One location where the traffic control device should be removed:

1. North Star Avenue and Marvin Street: Remove the northbound Stop sign. There is no other intersection control, since Marvin Street dead ends at this location and visibility is not an issue.

• Two (2) locations accessing SR-174 requires modification:

1. S. Forest Hill St. and SR174: Install a Stop sign on the southbound Forest Hill St. approach.
2. Vista and SR 174: The existing Stop sign is located in shadows and too far to the right of the approach. It needs relocation to improve motorists' visibility of the sign.

Unanimously approved by the city council, the intersection controls will not be placed until the CDBG Road Rehabilitation project is installed.

Colfax Memorial Day 2020 Celebration Muffled By COVID-19

By Nancy Hagman

Due to Covid-19 restrictions the traditional ceremonies by our local VFW for Memorial Day were cancelled by the VFW national administration.

Having gotten permission from the Placer County Health Department and the Colfax Cemetery District, Tom Hiatt, the American Legion Flag Chairman, organized the placement of flags on Saturday, May 23rd. Flags were also placed at the Indian Cemetery and the Weimar Cemetery.

And at the last minute Troop 6 of the Boy Scouts of America put together a flag ceremony for Monday, May 25, 2020 that included lowering the flag to half-staff, the singing of the National Anthem by Jen Belle (a Placer County home-girl who's working on her singing career in Nashville), a tribute prayer and moment of silence, reading of the history of Memorial Day, a group singing of "God Bless America" and "Taps" played by Becky Stonestreet, a real bugler and one of the adult leaders of Troop 6. The troop is based in Meadow Vista.

The attendees consisted of mostly family members and friends of Troop 6, local Vets, some local traditionalists and a couple of Vets that traveled to Colfax since there were no ceremonies in their hometowns.

Everyone attending the brief ceremony followed safety protocols as set out by the county health department.

Above – Placing individual flags were Scouts from Troop #6 in Meadow Vista are L-R, Parker Codet and Joey Goldsmith. Photo by Alan Shuttleworth
At right – Jen Belle sings the National Anthem. Photo courtesy of Nancy Hagman.

Opening May 27, 2020

Sierra Vista Center

- **Certified Farmers' Market at 55 School St. in Colfax.**
- **Every Wednesday, 4-7 P.M. May 27 – Oct. 14, 2020**
- **Prepared food vendors welcome**

- **Contact Market Manager Will Stockwin at 530-210-4291 or wstockwin@hughes.net for vendor applications and market rules.**

- **Preference will be given to Placer and Nevada County Growers.**

"Tubamonium" Coming To Colfax On June 11

Mark Meeker

Gary Shannon

Ike Geddings

Doug Thorley

The tuba quartet "Tubamonium" is seen here rehearsing, while maintaining social distancing by playing outdoors, in Colfax. This group performs in Nevada City and Grass Valley and will be playing some favorite tunes in the Roy Toms Plaza gazebo on Thursday, June 11, at 2:00 PM. Group members Ike Geddings and Gary Shannon of Grass Valley, Mark Meeker of Citrus Heights and Doug Thorley of Colfax have been working together for several years, and offer up a mix of show, pop and classical tunes for the listener's enjoyment. **Photos by Alan Shutleworth**

Churches

Colfax Assembly of God Community Fellowship
252 Culver St., Colfax, CA 95713
Email: colfaxaog@gmail.com
Website: http://www.colfaxagca.org/

Colfax Baptist Church
24850 Ben Taylor Rd., Colfax, CA 95713
530-346-8110
Email: pastorgaryhoward@yahoo.com
Website: http://colfaxbaptist.com/

Colfax United Methodist Church
59 W. Church St., Colfax, CA 95713
530-346-2267
Website: https://www.colfaxumc.org/

Kingdom Hall of Jehovah Witnesses
944 Canyon Way, Colfax, CA 95713
530-346-2525
Website: https://www.jw.org/en/

St. Dominic's Catholic Church
589 E. Oak St., Colfax, CA 95713
530-346-2286
Website: https://www.scd.org/parish/st-dominic-parish-colfax

Seventh Day Adventist
454 Scholtz Ave., Colfax, CA 95713
530-346-8844
Website: https://www.colfaxsdachurch.com

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
1875 S. Auburn St., Colfax, CA 95713
530-346-7702
Website: https://www.lds.org/

Social Organizations

American Legion Post 192
22 Sunset Dr., Colfax, CA 95713
530-346-9433
Website: http://norwellpost192.org

Colfax Area Chamber of Commerce
99 S. Railroad St., Colfax, CA 95713
530-346-8888
Website: http://colfaxchamber.com

Colfax Area Historical Society
Archives: PO Box 185, Colfax, CA 95713
Museum 99 Railroad St., Colfax, CA 95713
530-346-8599
Website: https://colfaxhistory.org

Colfax Garden Club
PO Box 1801, Colfax, CA 95713
530-346-7474
Website: http://californiagardenclubs.com/content/colfax-garden-club

Colfax Lions Club
PO Box 664, Colfax, CA 95713
530-477-2533
Website: https://www.e-clubhouse.org/sites/colfaxca

Gold Country Lionesses
PO Box 1852, Colfax, CA 95713

Illinoistown Clay-Mason Lodge #51 of Colfax
14 N. Main St., Colfax, CA 95713
530-346-6627
Website: http://lodge51.freemason.org

Salvation Army Service Unit
320 S. Canyon Way, Ste.A, Colfax, CA 95713
530-346-2722

Sierra Vista Artists
55 School St., Rm. C-4, Colfax, CA 95713
530-320-0433

Sierra Vista Center
55 School St., Colfax, CA 95713
530-346-8726
Website: https://sierravistacolfax.wordpress.com

Soroptimist International of Colfax
PO Box 475, Colfax, CA 95713
530-637-4878

VFW Post 2003
22 Sunset Dr., Colfax, CA 95713
530-346-7768
https://www.colfaxveterans.org/vfw.html

It's not over.
Wear a mask.
Be safe.
Photo by
wstockwin@hughes.net