

Calistoga Tribune

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- ▶ **TALKING (POT) SHOP**
City seeks resident input at forum on cannabis dispensaries
BELOW
- ▶ **ROWDY RED, GLADIATOR**
Growing tomatoes this year? There's plenty of choices... **7**
- ▶ **OFF TO A GOOD START**
CHS softball team opens league play with two big victories **12**

Siren test barely audible to most

■ Residents expecting city check of new warning system recall old siren's blasts

By Pat Hampton

Tribune Publisher

The emergency siren test lasted three minutes, wailing a warning designed to notify residents in the event of potential disasters from fire, flood, earthquake or other natural calamity.

The test did not resonate in the ears of those who reported, mostly through social media moments later Tuesday, that they did not, or barely, heard it.

"I was expecting to be blasted on Pine Street," Vilma Dodds posted on the Tribune's Facebook page. "Surprisingly, I could barely hear it. As much as I don't want that blast of sound every day at noon, as it was before, I think it needs to be closer to town. A friend on Cedar did not hear it at all."

Tuesday's test was brief, agreed city manager Dylan Feik, but it won't be the final sound in the search for a better emergency alert system following complaints after the Tubbs Fire that residents should

See **SIREN** on page 6

Mayor Chris Canning and Fire Chief Steve Campbell discuss the city's emergency siren requirements with representatives of safety systems experts company Federal Signal out of University Park, Ill., at the Little League field parking lot on Washington Street Tuesday morning.

PHOTO BY PAT HAMPTON



Calistoga students are failing arithmetic

By Kim Beltran

Tribune Editor

Calistoga students at all grade levels are struggling to meet basic standards and the achievement gap between white and Hispanic students has widened, school trustees learned Monday night.

As a group, students tested last year in grades three through six were in the "low" category, defined as 26 to 95 points below grade level, according to a presentation by high school math teachers Kathy Bone and Jeremy Grove. Seventh and eighth graders scored at the same level – low – and had declined as a group by three to 15 points.

Broken down, more than half of seventh and eighth graders – 52 percent – scored below basic on annual state assessments, known as Smarter Balanced CAASPP testing, Bone said. Twenty-nine percent scored at the basic level and 19 percent scored proficient.

See **MATH** on page 11

District 3 supervisor candidate Perez wants to fight harder for ag protections

By Kim Beltran

Tribune Editor

Lifelong St. Helena resident and grape grower Cio Perez says that if residents want to protect the rural lands that make Napa County the gem that it is, then it's time for new leadership on the board of supervisors.

He has watched, he said, for a couple of decades as county planners and supervisors have whittled away at landmark zoning laws intended to maintain restrictions on the type of business activities allowed in the unincorporated areas.

"We're celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Ag Preserve this year," Perez told the Tribune in an interview. "The original intent of the Ag Preserve was to keep urban uses in urban areas, and the main use to be allowed in the agricultural areas was farming.

"That has, with time, I think, been eroded to allow too much commercialism, even if it's associated with a winery," he said.

Born at St. Helena Hospital – or "The San," as he and many longtime residents still call it – Perez

attended St. Helena schools while growing up in a farming family founded by his grandfather, Lucio, who immigrated from Mexico first to Arizona and then to St. Helena. His father, Ezequiel, continued the tradition, raising Cio, his sister and three brothers on the family farm.

After attending Stanford and then graduating from UC Davis with degrees in viticulture and oenology, Perez returned home to manage several vineyards, including those planted by his grandfather.

Perez faces a tough battle in that he's running against a popular incumbent who has held the District 3 seat for four terms. Diane Dillon is also a St. Helena resident, and as a longtime member of the Napa County Farm Bureau, Perez has worked with her in the past, creating Measure J, which requires a vote of the people to change the Ag Preserve, and Measure P, which extends the protections to 2058.

Although he's never run for political office before, he said he decided it was time when several people in the communities of St. Helena and Calistoga approached him about running for supervisor.

"They were aware that I wasn't too happy with the direction the county has been choosing to take over the last decade or more," said Perez. "I just thought it was time to try and develop a little bit stronger leadership at the supervisor level."

He realizes, he said, the difficulties he could face in pushing his ag protection agenda if at least two other members don't agree with him but that's a risk he's willing to take.

"If the other supervisors continue to choose the direction that they've chosen up until now, it's going to be difficult to make any changes other than being vocal about it but sometimes I think that's better than just going along with the status quo," he said.

Indeed, he's not afraid to stand on his own when it comes to backing what he believes is right.

As a longtime member of the Napa County Farm Bureau who currently serves as the organization's land use chair, Perez stands in opposition to the group with his personal support of Measure C, a controversial ballot measure that would

See **PEREZ** on page 6



Lifelong St. Helena resident Cio Perez, a grape grower and land use chairman for the Napa County Farm Bureau, is challenging Diane Dillon for the District 3 county supervisor seat in the June 5 election. Perez says the county has grown lax in its protection of the agricultural preserve by allowing too many commercial uses – even at wineries. Dillon, also a St. Helena resident, has served as District 3 supervisor for 16 years, or four terms.

City forum on pot shops set for Wednesday

■ County also discussing ordinance change to allow outdoor cannabis cultivation

By Kim Beltran

Tribune Editor

Mayor Chris Canning will host a community forum next week on the possibility of the city allowing one or more marijuana dispensaries.

The meeting will be held at 6 p.m. Wednesday night at the Community Center, 1311 Washington St.

The city currently has a ban on medical marijuana dispensaries but the state's legalization of recreational cannabis, which took effect Jan. 1 of this year, revived the discussion.

The City Council voted earlier this year to allow residents to grow up to two marijuana plants outdoors on their own property. The new state law allows for six plants to be grown outside but also gives local governments the ability to restrict cultivation to indoors.

See **FORUM** on page 3