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New owner sprucing up the Calistoga Depot, rail cars

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\$8.9 million in General Fund as city looks to next budget

By Kim Beltran
Tribune Editor

A mid-year budget update presented to the City Council Tuesday night showed Calistoga's General Fund ended fiscal year 2016 with a balance of \$8.3 million.

In her report, administrative services director Gloria Leon said the city's financial outlook for the remainder of the year "remains stable but not strong" given potential demands on finances that are not addressed in the mid-year review.

Those demands include four vacancies to be filled in city departments and water and wastewater expenditures that outpace revenues for those operations.

The largest demand, however, is likely to come from the city's infrastructure repair and replacement needs, including streets and sidewalks, Leon said.

"While the city has

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Calistoga honors top cops, dispatchers

■ Big night for small but efficient staff

By Kim Beltran
Tribune Editor

Calistoga Police Chief Mitch Celaya recognized four members of his staff this week for heroic and exemplary action in the line of duty.

Officers Kristine Romo and Luis Paniagua, along with dispatchers Molly Harden and Jennifer Ross were showered with praise, certificates and medals in front of the City Council, their colleagues, friends and family members Tuesday night.

Romo, a 15-year veteran of the department, received a belated Lifesaving Award for a 2013 incident in which she resuscitated a non-responsive, 91-year-old tourist at a local spa. Romo, who happened to be in the vicinity of Calistoga Spa Hot Springs when the call went out, was on scene in three seconds and administered CPR to revive the man, who wasn't breathing.

Although she had received a certificate acknowledging her action from the Napa County Red Cross, the department had never publicly recognized her heroics.

"You can call it luck; being at the right place at the right time – I



PHOTO BY KIM BELTRAN

Calistoga Police Chief Mitch Celaya, far left, poses with officer Luis Paniagua, former Calistoga dispatcher Jennifer Ross, senior dispatcher Molly Harden and officer Kristine Romo after honoring them Tuesday night for heroic and exemplary action in the line of duty.

call it great police work and great service to the community," Celaya said Tuesday night. "This is actually an award that's way, way long overdue."

Paniagua, Harden and Ross received various honors for their roles in a July 12, 2016, incident involving two armed robbery sus-

pects fleeing Sonoma County who were detained in Calistoga.

Harden, who was working alone on July 12, was named 2016 Dispatcher of the Year and given a Meritorious Service Medal for her conduct that day. Ross, who had left her part-time dispatch position in Calistoga in June for a full-time

position at the Sonoma County Jail, earned a Certificate of Appreciation from the city for showing up of her own volition to assist Harden in the command center.

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Fair board welcomes five new members, reviews 2017 budget

■ Volunteers Hester, Englehard thanked for service with Blue Ribbon Awards

By Pat Hampton
Tribune Publisher

Five new faces joined the 11-member Napa County Fair Association's Board of Directors last week while three retiring members were thanked for their service.

Outgoing chair Bob Beck introduced new board members Gary Heitz, Kelly Barrett Coudert, Jeff Hoelkson and Ricky Hurtado during the annual Fair Association membership meeting Feb. 16. They took the oath of office in front of the 22 members in attendance. Nancy Levenberg, also a new member, was absent.

The five new directors join continuing board members Anne Steinhauer, Beck, Dana Cole, Woran Deckard, Bob Fiddaman and Karan Schlegel. Beck thanked the three retiring members, Kerri Abreu, Don Meyer and Bonnie Chisholm, for their service.

Assistant CEO Susan Clark, substituting for CEO Carlene Moore -- recovering at home from a severe foot injury and

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Luis David Perez power washes the top of one of six rail cars at the Calistoga Depot at 1458 Lincoln Ave. Monday morning during a brief break in the rainy weather. Depot owner John Merchant is sprucing up the property he purchased last December in an effort to attract new tenants to the retail space.

PHOTO BY PAT HAMPTON

New Depot owner giving train cars a scrub

By Kim Beltran
Tribune Editor

Things are beginning to look much brighter at the Calistoga Depot as new owner John Merchant has ordered a bit of spit and polish at the retail center that features a historic building and six

antique rail cars.

The cleanup began last week with a worker hosing down the rail cars.

"It's like we're power washing 50 years of grime off the tops of those cars," Merchant told the Tribune last week.

The effect of the scrub down was immediately evident, as the silver tops of the first two cars to be washed shone brightly during a break in the rain this week.

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