

Calistoga Tribune

Independently owned and published in Calistoga for Calistogans since 2002

50¢

Friday, July 25, 2014

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Council OK's \$325,000 marketing contract with chamber

■ Increases in TOT, sales tax revenues spur city council to approve increase in contract

By Pat Hampton
Tribune Publisher

With steady increases in the collection of transient occupancy taxes (TOT) and a nod to the marketing efforts of the Chamber of Commerce, the city council ap-

proved a three-year contract and a \$25,000 increase for promotion services with the chamber.

The current agreement, which expired June 30, paid the chamber \$300,000 a year for marketing Calistoga as a tourist destination to

increase revenues in sales tax and TOT, the city's dominant general fund revenue sources.

The new contract, which expires in 2017, is for \$325,000 with an annual increase based on the Consumer Price Index the next two years. If the current CPI average increase of 2.56 percent holds it could result in an additional \$8,320 to the chamber in 2016.

Mayor Chris Canning, who is CEO of the chamber, stepped out of last week's city council meeting and gave the gavel to vice mayor Michael Dunsford while the agenda item was discussed.

City manager Richard Spitler noted in his staff report that promotion of the town is necessary "to remain competitive in the challenging visitor economy."

City records show that with 690 rooms in town, the city is banking on collecting \$4 million in TOT revenues for 2013/2014, well above the five year average of \$3.48 million annually between 2008-2013. With an average room rate of \$239 a night, average occupancy for the town is 68 percent.

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Getting serious about water

By Pat Hampton
Tribune Publisher

Calistogans are getting serious about cutting down their water use, with some residents taking a serious look inside and outside their homes on places to cut back or make changes.

Peter and Kathy Partridge took a critical look at their Maggie Avenue home before making bold changes to their landscaping and indoor and outdoor water consumption.

"What got me thinking about it was the drought, and high water bills," Partridge said. The couple took out the lawn in their back yard and put down artificial turf to keep a spot of green and added drip irrigation to the plants around the edges. A large part of the back yard is patio with a barbeque area and newly created outdoor stone pizza oven for entertaining.

The couple, who spends time both here and in Redwood City, ripped out the traditional green square of lawn that fronted Maggie Avenue and sculpted a new, Mediterranean look with large boulders, dirt berms, drought tolerant plants and more drip irrigation. Everything is mulched to help keep moisture trapped in the soil and to minimize plant dehydration and keep water where it's needed.

In the kitchen, Partridge said because the sink is quite a ways from the water heater in the garage, he bought a small, red, one-gallon plastic bucket at the hardware store and uses it to capture cold faucet wa-

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Neighbor Peggy Berlin checks on Peter Partridge's homemade water collection system that he has installed to collect roughly 500 gallons of rain water this winter for use in his raised vegetable garden next summer.

Trade in old toilet, receive cash for grass

By Amanda Rhodes
Tribune Staff Writer

Get paid to trade in your old toilet and receive cash for removing your grass!

As California faces one of the most severe droughts in history, Calistoga residents have two new ways to save water and save money.

City council approved a \$30,000 program last week to expand the city's water conservation rebates to include high-efficiency toilets and water-efficient landscaping.

"Now is a perfect time to take advantage of this savings opportunity," said Anais Hall, newly hired program manager

of Conserve Calistoga.

The City of Calistoga will now offer a \$100 rebate on approved high-efficiency toilets that replace ones that consume 3.5 or more gallons per flush.

In addition, the city is also offering

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Big crowd for bridge, pathway discussion

■ Residents worried about privacy, access

By Claudia Aceves
Tribune Cub Reporter

A discussion regarding the replacement of the Berry Street bridge and new walking pathways in the Active Transportation Plan drew a large crowd to the Calistoga Community Center during last Wednesday's community forum with Mayor Chris Canning.

The forum gave members of the community the opportunity to express concerns and opinions over the bridge reconstruction as well as the proposed options of bike paths that were proposed by the city's planning and building department and presented by senior planner Erik Lundquist.

See **FORUM** page 6

New tasting room OK'd for old bank

■ Knights Bridge gets spot downtown

By Pat Hampton
Tribune Publisher

The green, empty corner building that was once home to the Calistoga Pharmacy and Bella Tootsie Shoes & More on Lincoln Avenue will now house the city's ninth wine tasting room.

The City of Calistoga Planning Commission approved 3-0 the proposed permit application for Knights Bridge winery that

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