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NAPA COUNTY AG
PRODUCTION NUMBERS

Twenty percent increase over last
year in overall farm products

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Historic uses are goal for revived Fairgrounds

■ Council committee prioritizes racetrack, golf course, RV park

By Tom Chorneau

Tribune Editor

The City Council sub-committee negotiating purchase of the Napa County Fairgrounds wants to restore legacy uses – the

racetrack, golf course and RV park – if the troubled 70-acre property is purchased from the county.

Councilman Scott Cooper, who along with Mayor Donald Williams comprises the city's bargaining team, said he and Williams are perhaps days away from unveiling a list of options the city might follow for taking possession of the Fairgrounds and operating it.

He said they have talked to a number of

industry experts about how to revitalize the three key enterprises at the Fairgrounds, all of which have passionate and vocal constituencies.

"The goal is to contract each of these out," he said. "We want to bring it all back to life. All of those components, that's our number one goal."

Cooper also said the committee has explored financial options, including a long-

term lease and a reduced purchase price.

"This is our last chance," he said. "But I think we have a good shot at it."

A sale agreement between the city and the county expired at the end of March, following city voters' rejection of a \$27.5 million bond measure that would have financed the purchase and provided money for unspeci-

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Council rethinks food truck ban

By Tom Chorneau

Tribune Editor

A plan to overturn a longstanding ban on food trucks inside the city of Calistoga has attracted widespread support, including an apparent majority of the City Council.

Debate at this week's council meeting centered not on whether the city should relax its restrictions, but rather where, when and how.

Irais Lopez-Ortega, Calistoga's vice mayor, said she supports allowing food trucks in town but only with limits.

"In the same way that we limit tasting rooms, we want limits," she said. "We don't want a 40-foot food truck on Main Street because that will affect our restaurants."

Although no one from the city's restaurant community spoke at the Tuesday night meeting, an email from Michael Dunsford, owner of the Calistoga Inn, suggested restaurateurs will be strong opponents.

"Allowing food trucks or carts in Calistoga is a mistake," Dunsford said. "The existing policy has been in place for many years for a reason. If you allow one, then you have to allow all, and you lose control."

Dunsford said "the biggest issue" is that existing restaurants have a variety of overhead expenses not present for food trucks, placing them at a competitive disadvantage with the mobile diners.

"Food trucks, however tasty they may be, present competition and take away business from those who have made considerable investments," he said.

The food truck issue comes forward as a result of the closure about two months ago of a popular vendor who operated in the parking lot of the Old Faithful Geysers on Tubbs Lane. Because the park is located outside city limits, however, it was Napa County officials who instigated the business code violation action.

A public outcry over the loss of the Geysers' truck and questions regarding another truck that operates inside the city at Tubbs Lane and Foothill Boulevard brought the issue before the Calistoga council.

In addition to Dunsford's email, the council received more than 20 other letters, the vast majority in support.

"Food trucks are the least expensive and sometimes most nutritious meal a person will have in the day," wrote Martha Casselman.

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Just kidding around at Old Faithful



PHOTO BY TIM CARL

Six baby Nigerian Dwarf goats have been added to the animal farm at Old Faithful Geysers, which already includes Tennessee Fainting Goats, Jacob's Four-Horned Sheep, a Cameroon Dwarf Goat and Guard Llamas. The three male and three female Nigerian Dwarfs were born on a farm in

Placerville and delivered to the Tubbs Lane tourist attraction this week. Between May 20 and June 2, Old Faithful will hold a naming contest for the animals, with the winner receiving a "Snuggling Party" for four. More information is available by visiting <http://www.oldfaithfulgeysers.com/>

Frankfurter flap boils over in Yountville

By Kim Beltran

Highway 29 Media

No one is sure of its origin but the age-old debate of whether ketchup belongs on a hot dog was reignited in Yountville recently with word that the tomato-based topping was no longer being offered with the renowned franks from Honor Market.

The gas station/store at the corner of Madison and Washington streets has a reputation county-wide for having a great dog for a sweet deal, selling, according to longtime employee Katelyn Huss, 65 to 70 dogs a day, on average, and as many as 100

a day in the summer.

In recent weeks, however, some locals who patronize the business began speaking out about the fact that they could no longer get ketchup if they wanted it.

"I'm thinking of opening a ketchup stand outside to help wayward hotdog buyers," Yountville resident Rob Wiley said, tongue firmly planted in cheek. Wiley said he actually prefers mustard on hot dogs, which he eats only on "special occasions." However, he said, "I do believe in free choice for all and if someone wants to put ketchup or sweet relish – yecch! – on their dog, who am I to say otherwise?"

But putting ketchup on hot dogs is just simply taboo, according to many, including the National Hot Dog and Sausage Council, which has decreed that ketchup is only acceptable as a condiment for those age 17 or younger.

Despite that edict, and aside from the fact that asking for the red sauce on a wiener in Chicago is considered criminal, a survey by the HDSC found that ketchup is actually the second-favorite topping among hotdog-eating Americans, behind mustard and ahead of onions, which are followed

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