

# Calistoga Tribune

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PHOTO COURTESY SAVANNAH FUENTES

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## Fair association preparing for management hand-off

By **Claudia Aceves**  
Tribune Reporter

Fair board members said they plan to meet with Napa County officials this month to work out details of a transition plan as the county prepares to take over management of the fairgrounds and its operations.

Last month, the county Board of Supervisors, in a letter to the fair board, confirmed its intention to assume management of Napa County Fairgrounds prop-

erty, which it owns but has never supported financially.

The fairgrounds' future has been uncertain since 2011 when, facing huge budget deficits, the state cut way back on funding for fair properties. This amounted to a more than \$200,000 hit – by far the largest chunk of revenue – for the Napa County Fairgrounds' budget.

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## City beefing up recreation services by \$200,000 a year

By **Kim Beltran**  
Tribune Editor

The city's recreation services budget will be increased by about \$200,000 a year in order to hire more staff and provide programs to residents free of charge, the City Council decided this week.

The budget adjustment is part of a restructuring of recreation services by making it an official city department with a director who heads up the programs and reports to city manager Dylan

Feik, as do all other department heads.

These changes will bring the recreation department's annual budget to around \$800,000 annually, Feik told City Council members Tuesday night during their consideration of the 2018-19 city budget, which they adopted.

"I'm very much in favor of proceeding on this," said councilman Gary Kraus. "To reiterate, this is not just for the kids of the community. Water aerobics would be free; adult basketball...all of

these programs that adults would participate in could also be free."

Members of this particular City Council for years have pushed for more and better recreation opportunities for its citizens.

Now, having gone from a year-ending General Fund balance of \$16,000 in 2009-10 to \$7.5 million at the end of this fiscal year, council members practically had

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## Latest Grand Jury report critical of county's fire response system

■ Citizens' panel recommends use of wireless alerts, increase of OES staff

By **Kim Beltran**  
Tribune Editor

The County of Napa has several shortcomings in both the warning system it uses for emergencies as well as in the procedures of its Office of Emergency Services during a severe crisis, the 2017-18 Napa County Grand Jury found.

In a report released last week on its investigation of

the county's alert systems during the October 2017 fire siege, the Grand Jury recommended that the county's current system – Nixle – "be augmented by a more reliable and ubiquitous platform used by other municipalities, called Wireless Emergency Alerts."

"In addition, the Grand Jury recommends other warning technologies such

as sirens and drones should be investigated and deployed, if feasible, in the event of loss of wireless telecommunications infrastructure," Grand Jurors wrote. "Napa County needs an overlapping, reliable, and effective emergency alert system."

Cities and counties, as well as fire and law enforcement officials impacted by the fast-moving flames the night of Oct. 8 have them-

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*This overhead view shows one of three designs for what is being called the Silverado Trail Gateway at the intersection of Lincoln Avenue and Silverado Trail. The area will serve as a parking lot and rest stop for bicyclists using the Vine Trail and hikers using the Oat Hill Mine Trail, whose trailhead is across Silverado Trail from the gateway parking lot.*



DESIGN BY  
GSM LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

## Planning director debuts early designs of 'Silverado Trail' gateway project

By **Kim Beltran**  
Tribune Editor

Calistoga planners on Tuesday night unveiled three preliminary designs of what they are calling the Silverado Trail Gateway – a parking lot and parklike pit stop for bicyclists and hikers using the Vine Trail or the Oat Hill Mine Trail.

The release of the conceptual plans signals the "opening of the public process"

that the city will undertake in implementing the proposal, said Planning director Lynn Goldberg, who worked with GSM Landscape Architects to draft the schematics.

The process includes outreach to and consultation with stakeholders – those people who would use the facility, and

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PHOTO BY CLAUDIA ACEVES

*After 10 years at his current location just outside Calistoga, Paul Block, who makes furniture and art from wine barrels and grapevines, is looking for a new home for himself and his unique business.*

## Wine barrel furniture maker looking for new home, business workshop

By **Claudia Aceves**  
Tribune Reporter

Since the move-in of his wine barrel furniture shop on New Year's Day 2009, artist Paul Block knew he'd one day have to say goodbye to the quiet, rural space three miles north of Calistoga that he'd instantly fallen in love with.

Ten years later, that time has come, but finding a new locale that meets his needs is proving difficult.

"It already haunted me that I was going to have to say goodbye one day, but it also really inspired me," said Block, who has been making nearly 100 unique pieces of furniture a week out of recycled wine barrels and grapevines at the scenic property on Highway 128 near Bennett Lane.

Recently purchased by a real estate developer, the property where Block lives and works will be renovated and

likely repurposed as a rental, Block said, leaving him with just three to six months to find a new home for his woodshop if he wants to continue creating the wine barrel furniture he's become known for.

"People know I'm the grapevine guy," Block said. "The secret to my success really has been donating my product and putting it in the public eye."

Block has pieces of furniture around Calistoga, including bar stools, a table, and the bench and chairs outside of the Calistoga Roastery; a grapevine at Dean and Deluca in St. Helena, as well as many products scattered at wineries and restaurants throughout the valley.

This move isn't the first time Block has had to relocate his work space, however, having been evicted from sev-

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