



Annual Review & the Year Ahead

Every year is a busy one, but from my conversations with many of you, 2011 seems to have set records for all of us! As we continue to push for progress on a variety of challenging issues during a slow economic recovery, I would like to share my annual report on milestones achieved and my continuing efforts as I serve you in the year ahead:

2011 Milestones:

- Began construction on the Marin Sonoma Narrows project. Also secured funds to begin design for extending the carpool lane an additional 1.7 miles northward to just south of the Landfill Interchange as part of Phase One of the Narrows project. This northbound expansion will relieve congestion through Novato, and get us closer to completing the carpool lane through the entire corridor.
- Worked with Assemblyman Huffman for successful passage of AB1103, allowing for greater flexibility in meeting our housing goals and RHNA numbers. Specifically, AB1103 allows more options for counting conversion units towards RHNA numbers, such as fore-closed homes, Habitat for Humanity homes and second units.
- Worked successfully as Vice Chair of the SMART Board to achieve independently vetted cost and revenue estimates and a rigorous project review of the largest public works project launched in the Bay Area since the start of Great Recession. These efforts resulted in the following steps this year to achieve SMART's voter-approved mandate while living within its budget:
 - ⇒ Began webcasting and online archiving of all meetings
 - ⇒ Secured \$32 million for the project in additional regional funds, approved by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission with a specific statement from MTC that the project meets its Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Policy **without a single additional unit of housing near any station.**

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County Launches New Website and Contact Info "www.marincounty.org" and "473-" phone prefix ring in 2012

On New Year's Day, the County of Marin launched a new, user-friendly electronic look and simplified its contact information — with a newly designed website with a more intuitive address, www.marincounty.org. This replaces the old web domain name www.co.marin.ca.us, which followed the initial standard of government naming format developed over a decade ago, but is generally now seen as cumbersome and difficult to remember.

The website has been revamped with a fresh, clean design and organized so information and services are easier and quicker to find, such as paying taxes, accessing County records, and retrieving applications for licenses and permits. It also highlights news and events in Marin County, connects to the County's social media accounts, and provides a new interactive, full-featured calendar complete with details about upcoming meetings and events that can be imported directly into your personal calendar.

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Update Your Address Book!
 Supervisor Judy Arnold
 Email: JArnold@marincounty.org
 Phone: (415) 473-7331
www.marincounty.org



2011 in Review; the Year Ahead (continued from page 1)

- ⇒ This funding ensures that SMART will extend to downtown San Rafael's Transit Center in the First Phase, and as a result of its independent analysis of the project, MTC has, for the first time, designated SMART as a high priority project for state and federal funding grants.
- ⇒ Approved the first major construction contract of \$103 million, which brings a minimum of 900 jobs to our region, employs local subcontractors and saves the taxpayers more than \$14 million over anticipated costs, while simultaneously restoring the Novato North Station and Novato Creek Bridge replacement (which will preserve service during heavy rains and will also improve flood control for several Novato neighborhoods) to the First Phase.
- ⇒ This contract also extends the First Phase to the Guerneville Road station in north Santa Rosa, a major employment center with existing residential development, which boosts SMART's numbers vis a vis MTC's TOD policy even higher. This means Phase I will also serve the significant number of residents, students and employees who commute between this area and Marin, and **in total, Phase I will now serve 80% of the potential riders along the full rail line.**
- ⇒ Secured the highest available bond rating and issued \$191 million (with proceeds of \$171 million) at an interest rate of 0.2%, to be held in escrow. Once the repeal issue is resolved, SMART is poised to immediately issue additional construction and systems contracts for the rail and multi-use path, bringing even more jobs.
- ⇒ Achieved an agreement with the bus transit agencies in both Marin and Sonoma to work together to launch express bus connectors in coordinated scheduling with initial rail service, to directly serve the stations not part of Phase I (Larkspur in Marin, and Windsor, Healdsburg and Cloverdale in Sonoma).
- ⇒ Sales tax revenues have begun outperforming our now-conservative estimates, with confirmed numbers from the State Board of Equalization reporting a 7% gain (year over year) for April – June 2011 and a 9% increase for July – September (SMART had budgeted for 5% growth as part of our fiscal review)
- Adopted Pension Reform Policy Guidelines for Marin County, which includes support for the Governor's 12-Point Pension Reform Plan, passed publicly by Board Resolution (see the Pension article in this newsletter for more details on Pension Reform).
 - ⇒ Raised the retirement age for new hires in all miscellaneous categories (6 bargaining units) to reduce County pension costs: negotiated new, lower cost 2% at 61 ¼ retirement tier.
- Worked successfully with the Novato Theater re-opening volunteers to meet the initial \$750,000 fundraising goal, leveraging a pledge of \$150,000 from the County Community Partnership Fund as a challenge grant to the community. This key milestone moves the effort to restore a much needed magnet to our downtown and local economy forward, but much work remains in the year ahead!
- Approved the Analysis of Impediments, a report on discrimination that still exists in Marin under federal fair housing law and an action plan to address these inequalities to ensure fair access to housing regardless of disability, race, family status, sexual preference, or other factors designated by Title VI.
- Worked as Vice Chair of the Marin Economic Forum to integrate economic data and analysis into the information available to policy makers, local government staff and the public. In addition to the forecast on the overall Marin economy, MEF issued the "2011 City of Novato Economic Report", contracted by the City of Novato in partnership with the Forum.
 - ⇒ A summary of this first-ever Novato economic report was presented to the Council at its October 25th meeting, and will be a topic of a scheduled Council work session in early 2012. The report is the result of the compilation and analysis of newly released data from the 2010 Census. It identifies key elements of and opportunities unique to the Novato economy, and will provide the basis for further economic development discussions with the City Council.

I encourage all to go online and view the video of the presentation and the report itself, which can be found online at: http://novato.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=4&clip_id=548

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2011 in Review & the Year Ahead (continued from page 2)

- Completed the Novato Needs Assessment to help guide transit planning for Novato over the next five years. The assessment evaluates transit services currently operating in and throughout Novato, identifies new and emerging mobility needs that fall outside the current menu of transit services, and crafts practical strategies for meeting these needs.
- Approved master plan for Stafford Lake Bike Park. The 17 acre bike park will provide a bicycle riding area for the public designed for riders of all ages and skill levels. Construction is expected to begin this year.

Many of these items are ongoing priorities and projects, and will of course continue to be significant areas of focus in 2012. In addition, as I mentioned during my public comments regarding 2012 priorities at the January 10 Board of Supervisors meeting, I believe that the Sustainable Communities Strategy being prepared by the Association of Bay Area Governments and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (as regional agencies, in response to the State requirements laid out by SB375) will be critical in 2012.

I believe that it is very important that these regional agencies fully engage the public prior to putting forth requirements that local governments must follow. It will be critical that the public has the opportunity to receive clear information over the course of multiple sessions, and the opportunity to comment based on this information as the plan evolves.

We as the Board of Supervisors, as well in our roles as representatives to the other boards and commissions on which we serve, must work in concert with our counterparts in Marin's cities and towns as well as our State representatives to press for the regional agencies to base their plans on the feedback from local jurisdictions. A successful outcome will also depend on an engaged public willing to spend the time to become informed, and all parties engaging in the kind of respectful, constructive dialogue that is needed to find solutions.

My personal resolution for 2012 is to look inward when challenges or controversies arise and try to not just listen, but to hear what others are saying and to understand what brings them to their point of view.

Our grandmothers and grandfathers who lived through the depression learned to not only be frugal, but also to share: to help those who were less fortunate. I believe by giving, even when we are hurting, we are strengthened. I believe Marin County and its Fifth District can meet our challenges in the year ahead and come through with a deep resolve to listen to each other, to respect all points of view, and to work together to make our community even better.

As always, if you have concerns, please call or email me as we move forward together!

HOT TOPICS ON MY COUNTY WEB PAGE

If you'd like to keep up to date between newsletters, check in on my [County web page](#)! You can view a variety of "Hot Topics" items, and find links to my monthly columns in the Novato Advance as well as past newsletters.

New County Website & Contact Info (continued from page 1)

Testing included beta testing by members of the public and County employees, who provided more than 200 responses with ideas for improvements, many of which have been incorporated. More improvements will be rolled out in the coming year as individual department pages are upgraded. Until then, the new site links seamlessly to content still in the older design.

In conjunction with the new look and name, the County has changed its email addresses to reflect the shorter name @marincounty.org, and has also consolidated multiple telephone prefixes to a single 473- prefix for all county telephone numbers. Simply replace 507- or 499- with the new 473- in all County phone numbers. To find any contact in the County office, the public can dial the automated attendant at 473-7000.

The old telephone prefixes as well as email and web address will continue to work until July 2012 as residents and contacts adjust to the changes.

And the 2011 Look Who's Getting It Done Award Goes to...Ken Harth!



Great volunteers often inspire others, and Ken's activities have triggered the interest of local Rotaries, the Marin Motorcycle Club as well as many individuals in helping with these trail improvement efforts.

Ken is a former President of the Novato Downtown Business Association and has given hundreds of hours of volunteer work to the community that he loves. Ken was awarded the Heartwood Volunteer Award from County Parks in 2010 and has previously been awarded Volunteer of the Week by the Marin IJ.

Congratulations Ken on your quiet work of seeing something that needs doing and getting it done. Your efforts to improve and maintain County Open Space through endless hours of hard work and dedication are a benefit to and appreciated by our entire community, which is evident through the "fan club" Ken has developed who leave thank you letters with scores of signatures. Thank you Ken, for all that you do.

I am delighted to announce that the 2011 winner of the **LOOK WHO'S GETTING IT DONE AWARD** goes to **KENNETH HARTH** for his incredible volunteer work with Marin County Parks and most recently his work on trails and fire roads in the Indian Valley Preserve.

Ken became a Marin County Parks Environmental Stewardship Program Volunteer for Trails in March 2010. His experience as an Engineer and his intimate knowledge of the trails from hiking them since 1976 gave County Parks confidence that he would do a great job. They were correct; Ken has become a truly valuable volunteer.

Ken's trail work concentrated on trails that were hand dug about 25 to 30 years ago and have received little maintenance since. Ken told me, "For years I have watched these beautiful trails erode and deteriorate to the point of being almost impassable in winter."

This launched Ken into action. He joined the County's Environmental Stewardship Program and so far he has: re-excavated and restored over a half mile of trail; eliminated all the seasonally muddy spots on the Schwindt Trail; re-groomed the full length of the Waterfall Trail between the areas he has restored (with only two muddy spot needing restoration/regarding); stabilized and made storm water improvements to the Clark Malone Trail; and stabilized the Witzel Trail (yes this is the Ron Witzel trail that the Board of Supervisors named in Ron's honor in 2009).



Completed Trail Section

LOOK WHO'S GETTING IT DONE AWARD

In 2007 I started the annual LOOK WHO'S GETTING IT DONE AWARD. I make this award every year in January.

The award recognizes someone in the 5th District who "got something done" for our community. The winner is featured in my "County Connection" article in the Novato Advance, in my newsletter, and on my County webpage.

If you would like to nominate someone for the 2012 Look Who's Getting it Done award, please contact my aide Tanya Albert at: TAAlbert@marincounty.org

2012 County Pension Reform Guidelines Adopted

As part of our continuing effort to address Pension Reform for County employees, the Board of Supervisors adopted the following policy, including support for the Governor's Statewide 12-point plan, at our December 6, 2011 meeting:

The Marin County Board of Supervisors recognizes that public employee retirement costs are unsustainable without reform. Given the economic downturn and changing demographics, the increased costs of post-employment benefits compete with limited public resources for vital services to our residents, including health and human services, public safety, parks, roads, transportation and many other services. Our overall goal to guide pension reform is to be fair to our employees and fiscally responsible to our residents.

We have already taken several steps to control our pension costs. They include:

- capping pension COLAs to 2% annually
- requiring employees to pay 50% of the cost for any COLA's and 50% of the cost for enhanced formulas
- using the average of the highest three years' earnings for pension calculations
- negotiating new, lower cost 2% @ 61 ¼ tiers for new miscellaneous employees
- reducing the long-term liability for retiree health by at least \$18 million over the past 4 years by creating a lower cost defined contribution plan for new hires and adopting more cost-effective health plans

We are currently negotiating with our safety bargaining groups for new, lower cost pension tiers. In addition, we will begin work this spring to create a trust to more proactively address our unfunded retiree health liabilities.

Our Board supports statewide efforts to create more sustainable benefit levels. Although we would prefer statewide solutions, we are also willing and expect the need to pursue Marin-specific solutions. Our support of pension reform includes, but is not limited to:

- creating lower cost hybrid defined benefit/defined contribution pension options
- prohibiting unfunded retroactive pension increases
- providing employers new options to exclude certain pay types from being pension-eligible to prevent pension "spiking"
- prohibiting retirement systems from granting ad hoc COLA's to retirees without the support of the Board of Supervisors or the employer's governing board
- exploring limits on so-called 'double-dipping' between other government agencies
- capping pension benefits to a certain percentage of pay or dollar amount

We welcome participation from all stakeholders to help us influence change at the State level to provide further options for the County to control costs.

Governor's 12-Point Plan. The Board supports the Governor's 12-Point Pension Reform Plan, as it contains many of the policy options for which we have been advocating to make pensions more sustainable. For example, the plan includes:

- a comprehensive statewide plan for all public employees to enable a fair and even playing field for recruiting future talent
- options that would better share costs between the employer and the employee
- prohibition on retroactive pension benefit enhancements that create unfunded liabilities
- increases to the retirement age for new employees
- three-year averaging for benefit calculations
- limitations on pensions to base pay to control spiking
- prohibition of "air-time" purchases of service credits and pension holidays

However, other elements require further details in order to take a fully informed position. For instance, we need to better understand the estimated normal costs of the proposed hybrid pension plan for new employees, and the legal viability of requiring a 50-50 contribution split of normal costs for existing employees. Once these details are available from the Governor's Department of Finance, we will review them to ensure they are consistent with the County's goals.

For more information about County pensions, visit : www.co.marin.ca.us/depts/AD/Main/pension/index.cfm

Expansion of CDBG Priority Setting Committee

The County of Marin and the Cities and Towns that participate in the County's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Programs are inviting candidates to apply for new seats on the Countywide Priority Setting Committee and its Local Area Committees. The local governments in Marin are expanding the CDBG and HOME committees with the goal of increasing the diversity of these committees, and therefore this recruitment is specifically for individuals who represent the interests of racial and ethnic minorities and/or people with disabilities. The purpose of the expansion of the committees is to bring greater diversity to the group that advises the Board of Supervisors on the CDBG and HOME funding allocation process and provides input on the County's implementation of the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice.

For more information and to download an application, visit: www.marincdbg.com. Applications must be received by 5:00pm on February 7, 2012.



PARKS WINTER NEWS AND EVENTS

The Winter newsletter from County Parks & Open Space is now available—and is chock full of FREE activities to take full advantage of Marin's natural wonders during the season. Read the latest about the 680 Trail, the Stafford Lake Bike Park project and the Name the Hawk Contest. Discover a volunteer event, naturalist hike or ranger activity for you and your family to enjoy. Visit: www.maringov.org/Depts/PK/Main/Newsletter.aspx

- News
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Naturalist-led Walks
- Naturalist-led Family Walks
- Ranger Events
- Dog-friendly Hikes

at: www.maringov.org/Depts/PK.aspx

Upcoming Workshops for Small Business



The following workshops are being offered by the Northern California Small Business Development Centers.

NxLevel — March 7 - May 23, Dominican University Venture Greenhouse, San Rafael

Are you ready to plan for the success and growth of your business? Do you wish you better understood your financial statements? Are you ready to take your business to the next level? Then you are a candidate for NxLevel! The NxLevel Entrepreneur course is a 12-week intensive program designed to encourage business expansion and growth.

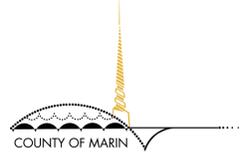
FREE Orientation: February 22 or 29, 2012 from 6-7pm at Venture Greenhouse, 30 Castro Ave., San Rafael. To register or get more information, call (707) 524-1770 or email sbdc@santarosa.edu.

Basic Guide to Exporting Webinar — January - Aug 2012

Learn how your company can tap into the Global Marketplace. Beginning January 2012, as part of the National Export Initiative, the Commerce Department's Trade Information Center is offering a series of one-hour webinars on the basics of exporting. "The webinars are in response to enthusiastic demand for events which provide a more comprehensive understanding of the export process. We are also excited to introduce new transaction oriented topics in 2012 that get into the weeds on subjects like duty drawback, temporary export shipments and more," said Doug Barry, coordinator of the educational series for the International Trade Administration.

The series includes webinars on how to write an export plan, how to ship goods to international buyers, and how to classify products under the harmonized system, as well as estimating the full cost to the buyer of delivering your products to a foreign destination. Cost: \$15.

Learn more/register: http://export.gov/articles/eg_main_022213.asp



Judy Arnold, Marin County Supervisor

DISTRICT 5 COUNTY CONNECTION NEWSLETTER

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February 2012 calendar grid showing dates 1-29 with color-coded cells.

March 2012 calendar grid showing dates 1-31 with color-coded cells.

Upcoming Meetings

- Feb 7—Board of Supervisors Meeting
Feb 14—Board of Supervisors Meeting
Feb 15—1:30pm, SMART Board Meeting
Feb 20—Presidents Day (county offices closed)
Feb 23—7pm, Transportation Authority of Marin Meeting
Feb 28—Board of Supervisors Meeting
Mar 13—Board of Supervisors Meeting
Mar 19—10am, Transit District Meeting
Mar 20—Board of Supervisors Meeting
Mar 21—1:30pm, SMART Board Meeting
Mar 22—7pm, Transportation Authority of Marin Meeting
Mar 27—Board of Supervisors Meeting

All Board of Supervisors, Transit District, and TAM Meetings are open to the public and are held in the BOS Chambers in the Marin Civic Center at 3501 Civic Center Drive, Suite 329.

Meeting locations for SMART Board meetings vary; visit www.sonomamarintrain.org, then click on "Documents", then "Board Archive" for details.

Start times for BOS meetings can vary. For start times and agenda packet materials for upcoming as well as minutes of prior meetings:

Go to the County of Marin website at www.marincounty.org In the "Board of Supervisors" section, click "Agendas & Minutes"

BOS meetings are also webcast live. To watch:

Go to the County of Marin website at www.marincounty.org In the "Board of Supervisors" section, click "Watch a Meeting" Click on "Live Video Broadcast" near the top of the page

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