

Update on Pension Reform

The Board of Supervisors has long agreed that current 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 and transportation. The County has been making steady progress toward the goal of reducing pension and retiree health costs. You can see a summary of actions taken since I took office in 2007 on my County "Hot Topics" web page: <http://www.co.marin.ca.us/depts/BS/main/sups/sdistr5/countypensions.cfm>

On April 3, 2012, I attended an educational public forum on Sustainable Public Employee Pensions for Marin County government that the County of Marin convened. The Board of Supervisors adopted guiding principles on pension reform and endorsed the Governor's 12-point plan back in December 2011. While the state is debating the components of the plan, the County took the opportunity to engage and educate the public on County pensions, what steps the County has already taken to control pension costs, and gather community feedback on possible next steps. Over 200 people attended the three hour discussion, which can be viewed at: www.marincounty.org/main/pensions.

Following up on the April 3 forum, the Board of Supervisors approved the following action items to further pension and benefits reform. These are the most specific and forward thinking reforms of any of the 58 counties in California. The next steps the County will take include:

1. Setting up the Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) trust for FY 12-13 to reduce long-term liabilities for retiree health. By setting up the trust, we will reduce our debt by \$210 million over the next 15 years and will be one of the few public agencies paying down its liability, as well as paying for "pay-as-you-go" costs.

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Old County Emails and Prefixes to Expire in July

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 replaced 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.

In conjunction with the new look and name, the County changed its email addresses to reflect the shorter name @marincounty.org, and 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 - which is right around the corner, so be sure to update your address books today!

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

Update on Pension Reform (continued from page 1)

2. Negotiate a lower cost pension tier for Firefighters and seek state legislation to allow sharing of pension costs for our safety tier. Once we have successfully negotiated a new tier with Firefighters, we will seek a “me-too” legislation consistent with last year’s AB 89, a San Mateo County-only bill that allows cost sharing for new tiers. We have already negotiated with the Deputy Sheriff’s Association. If we are successful, Marin will have introduced a new lower-cost pension benefit for all new employees (safety and miscellaneous).

3. Negotiate with all bargaining units a 2% cap of the amount the County pays toward the employee’s share of pension costs. Our largest employee union, Marin Association of Public Employees (MAPE), has already agreed to this and we have agreement with our mid-managers association. We will need to bargain with all other groups for this change.

4. Seek and advocate for state reform consistent with our Pension Reform Guidelines. Not only is our Board one of the only counties to advocate for the Governor’s 12-point plan, but we will also explore other legislative reforms that achieve similar results. Senator Steinberg has indicated that State lawmakers are considering a hybrid plan that would allow for a defined benefit component capped at a certain salary level.

5. Begin effort to explore a Marin County hybrid plan. Our Board has directed staff to contract with an actuarial firm to begin to design options for a Marin-specific hybrid plan. Toward that end, we will hold information sessions with our employee bargaining units and receive public input. The next step would be to negotiate the new plan and get Marin-specific legislation approved to begin the plan.

6. Continue to provide public information and seek input from the community. We have directed the County Administrator’s office to provide follow-up information to community members, who attended the forum, including: understandable information about retiree health, clarification of what can or can’t be changed, and information about various hybrid plan options.

Pension and health benefit reform is a key public issue these days, and one that our Board has listened to, heard, and is acting upon. I am proud of the leadership role the County has taken to reduce costs through meaningful reform, and I am committed to achieving pension reform that is fair to our employees and fiscally responsible to our residents.

If you would like more information about County pensions, visit the County’s website at www.marincounty.org/main/pensions - or contact me at 499-7331.

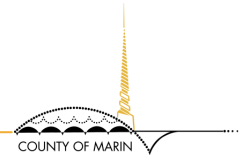
Kids Take Action Against Climate Change

Students in Marin County have been learning that they can help protect the polar bears' fragile habitat--and their own--from climate change with the flip of a switch. By turning off lights, unplugging their video games, biking and walking to school, reducing, reusing and recycling and many other simple actions, they are reducing their carbon footprint and the greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change. Not only that, but they're also teaching their families about what they can all do together to save energy and reduce waste.

Elementary and middle schools throughout Marin County have been empowered to be leaders of change in their families by a program called **Cool the Earth**. Created by a Marin mom, Carleen Cullen, for her children's elementary school, the program has been replicated and run in schools around the county and across the country. Cool the Earth materials and instructions are provided and the program is run by a volunteer parent or teacher as a 2-month campaign for multiple years.

Do you have a child in a K-8 school? Would you like to help empower kids to be the change we need to combat global warming? Cool the Earth is seeking parent or teacher volunteers to continue running the program at local schools. Please visit cooltheearth.org and contact Chloe Martin at cmartin@cooltheearth.org for more information on how you can get involved.





County Budget Update

In April the County began the public hearing process for the FY 2012-13 County Budget. While no decisions will be made until the June budget hearings later this month, the County wanted to provide another opportunity for the public to be involved and to further an open and transparent process. These hearings also provide our departments the opportunity to discuss their FY 2012-13 performance plans and potential long-term restructuring options to close future year budget shortfalls.

We have been through several challenging years, due to the lingering effects of the recession and the resulting budget shortfalls counties and cities in California are experiencing. Marin is fortunate that we have acted prudently these past years, and are not in the dire circumstances some counties find themselves in. We have the highest bond rating of any county in California, and have taken significant steps to reduce our budget, decrease retiree healthcare costs and address pension reform while maintaining and improving vital services.

The actions that we've taken over the past several years have put us in a position to make significant progress toward closing what had been a projected \$50 million deficit over a five-year period. Now entering the fourth year of our five-year long-term restructuring plan, we have reduced over \$30 million of our projected \$50 million shortfall and reduced our workforce by over 200 positions (10%). Although we've made significant progress, we project future shortfalls for the next three years.

Based upon our mid-year review, we have revised our budget projections. Significant changes from our November projections include: (1) Better-than-expected pension investment earnings through June 30, 2011; (2) Revised labor costs assumptions based on the recent Marin Association of Public Employees (MAPE) labor agreement; (3) Adjustments in various revenues, including increases to excess ERAF revenues and decreases in interest earnings and departmental revenues to reflect current actuals; and (4) Increases in some departmental expenses, such as fuel costs.

Given the continued slowdown in revenues, we expect a relatively flat operating budget next year. Our revised budget shortfall for next year is \$2.5 million, or less than 1 percent of our General Fund operating budget. This is significantly less than the budget gaps many of our comparable counties are facing. Our projections indicate budget shortfalls for the next three years largely because of slower revenue growth and higher pension and retiree health costs.

The establishment of a retiree health benefits trust next year would save an estimated \$2.5 million General Fund in FY 2012-13, and more than \$5 million ongoing beginning FY 2013-14 - creating significant savings relative to our previous forecast while fully funding our required contribution for the County's retiree health liabilities, something few local governments can claim.

Unfortunately, our budget will include recommended layoffs relating to State realignment of Children's Mental Health Services, and federal cuts to the Women, Infant and Children's (WIC) program. Through a combination of holding positions vacant, as well as attempts to reprogram staffing levels toward a new, lower level of service program for basic Children's Mental Health Services, we have mitigated reductions in force to the maximum extent possible. As a result, the proposed budget will include approximately 11 position reductions that would involve filled positions.

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Attention Novato Businesses!

Starting June 5th the Smart Lights Program will be in the Novato area offering free no-obligation energy efficiency assessments to local businesses. Smart Lights is specially designed to help small businesses become more energy-efficient. The program ***offers free start-to-finish technical assistance and instant rebates to help defray the cost of upgrading and/or repairing existing equipment.*** Smart Lights services include:

If you would like to request a free no-obligation assessment, please visit www.smartlights.org to learn more and complete an online enrollment form.

For more information, call (510) 981-7750.



County Budget Update (continued from page 3)

Because of projected shortfalls over the next three years, our County Administrator has worked with our departments to identify 28 long-term reduction policy options that will help us address our future budget shortfalls. These options were presented for informational purposes during the workshops, and will be explored by staff over the next year to help close future budget shortfalls. These options require future staff analysis and would only be implemented by subsequent actions of the Board of Supervisors.

Some examples include the following: Eliminate remaining Green Commute carpool incentive program; Increase Marin Commons rental revenue from private lessees; Implement ticketing software system changes at Marin Center; Consider sharing responsibility for Public Health Laboratory services with one or more neighboring counties; Explore additional realignment of Health & Human Services clinics; Implement virtual PCs as older PCs expire; Identify new ongoing revenue sources to support parks, open space, and agriculture conservation; and Explore reducing or eliminating the County's Print Shop.

The County will hold additional public hearings on June 18 and 20 to finalize the FY 2012-13 County Budget. For more information about the budget process and to review materials presented at our public hearings, visit: www.co.marin.ca.us/budgetinfo/

It is imperative that we continue to come up with new ways of doing business as a County while continuing to strive toward providing excellent services in an environment of continued State cuts to local governments. My goal is to ensure that we do the most important things well. I am proud that the County has been able to address our fiscal challenges in a thoughtful manner while maintaining a high level of service for our residents and clients.

UPCOMING BUDGET HEARINGS

June 18, 2012 at 9:00 am
Board of Supervisors Chambers

1. Overview of Proposed Budget
2. Public Comment
3. Summary by Service Area
4. Board of Supervisors Statements
5. Human Resources Actions: Approve Recommended Reduction in Force actions consistent with County's FY 2012-13 Proposed Budget

June 20, 2012 at 9:00 am
Board of Supervisors Chambers

1. Opening Statements
2. Public Comment
3. Capital Improvement Program
4. County Finance Director Overview of the Special Districts Budget for FY 2012-13
5. Closing Statements
6. Budget Actions

2012 Marin County Fair: June 30—July 4

The theme of 67th Marin County Fair is **Always Fresh, Fun and Local**, celebrating the legacy and future of Marin's vibrant agricultural community. Along with traditional fair favorites (thrilling carnival rides, tasty fair cuisine, adorable farm animals and spectacular fireworks), exciting competitions and attractions featuring Always Fresh, Fun and Local will be the highlight of the 2012 fair.

In partnership with UCCE Farm Advisor, the Marin County Fair is organizing a fair-wide agricultural celebration. Enjoy the new Grown in Marin Pavilion and learn more about the past, present and future of all things agricultural. Our signature exhibit will feature the photography of M.B. Boissevain- a farm advisor during the early 20th century who documented agricultural practices of dairies and ranches throughout Marin County.

For more information about Marin County Fair attractions, concerts and schedules, visit: www.marinfair.org

To purchase Marin County Fair tickets, visit: <http://www.marinfair.org/fair-facts/tickets>

See you at the Fair!



Help Stafford Lake Bike Park



The Stafford Lake Bike Park project is moving forward and has launched an aggressive fundraising campaign to raise the monies needed for construction of the facility. The project, led by Marin County Parks, is a 17-acre bike park located within Stafford Lake County Park in Novato. Once completed, this will be the largest bike skills park in California. It is designed to provide a bicycle riding area for the public for riders of all ages and skill levels - beginner through expert.

The bike park will promote a community of learning and advancement while providing a safe, fun and exciting bike-riding experience in a designed setting which is expected to reduce inappropriate use in our resource preserves. Currently we don't have any facilities in Marin that provide this type of bicycling experience, and this project has the potential to fulfill a great need for bicycle enthusiasts of all ages in our ever-growing bicycle community.

Over the years, I have heard consistent feedback from parents and community organizations that there is a need to offer more recreational options for our local youth and that in particular, we need more positive and healthy activities available that will appeal to our teens. I am especially enthusiastic about this aspect of the project, and that there has been particular interest from Marin youth who are looking for places to ride after school and on weekends.

During the master planning phase last year, neighbors, local riders, businesses and interested community members participated in a series of community design workshops to learn more about the project and share their design ideas.

Many of the ideas and features provided at these workshops were incorporated into the final design of the project, including: a kids' learn-to-ride area; pump tracks for beginning, intermediate and expert riders; table top jumps and hip jumps; elevated ladder bridges; a dual slalom track; practice areas and skills stations; a perimeter trail; and shade structures and view areas.

A mitigated negative declaration of environmental impact and the master plan for Stafford Lake Bike Park was approved by the Board of Supervisors Nov. 15. Construction documents are currently being developed and will be completed in March. The estimated cost to construct the facility is \$850,000, including hardscape features, infrastructure, trails, and environmental mitigations.

Unfortunately, the county does not have the funds to construct the bike park, and the development of the facility is dependent on community donations. The county will be working with the community for help raising the needed funds. Supporters will include local bicycle clubs and riders, manufacturers, everyone and anyone who is interested with bikes, as well as those interested in helping create additional outdoor recreational activities in our community.

While it isn't easy to fundraise during these tough economic times, there is a tremendous amount of support and excitement for this project so I feel confident about its success. To kick-start the fundraising, Supervisor Steve Kinsey and I are offering a matching challenge grant of \$50,000 from the county's Community Partnership funds. We hope you will join us in supporting this great addition to Marin County Parks and Novato.

MAKE A DONATION TODAY!

Via credit card: Visit the Marin Community Foundation's website and complete the online donation form, <https://www.marincf.org/giving/donors/how-to-give/online-donation-form>. Insert "Open Space and Parks Fund" on line #1 and complete the application.

Via check: Make checks payable to "Marin County Parks" and mail to, Steve Petterle at 3501 Civic Center Drive, Suite 260, San Rafael, CA 94903.





MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

I look forward to seeing you at this year's
4th of July Parade in Novato

July 4, 2012
10am-noon

In Downtown Novato

For more information visit,
<http://novatoparade.com/>



PARKS SUMMER NEWS AND EVENTS



The Summer 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. Learn about the projects we're working on as well as the free programs we offer including Community Volunteer Days, Naturalist Outings, and Ranger Events. You're sure to discover something 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

New Call Center and Main Numbers for Health and Human Services

Public Assistance has launched a new enhanced Call Center staffed by Office Assistants at 120 Redwood Drive. This team has received special training to allow them to field many of the basic inquiries that the agency receives by telephone, and these staff members can also assist callers with beginning an application for Public Assistance benefits such as Medi-Cal, County Medical Services Program, Path2Health, and CalFresh (formerly known as Food Stamps).

Please note that former extensions 473-3460, 473-3470, and 473-3384 have been retired. These extensions automatically forward to 473-3400. New menu options for 473-3400 include a connection to the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system and information about applying online via C4Yourself.

The Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system is an automated telephone system which allows existing benefit recipients to set up an IVR account to obtain information about their case and order duplicate forms.

C4yourself is an online system that allows the public to apply for benefits online at:
www.c4yourself.com

The public may also use the on-line screening tool to see if they might qualify for benefits at:
<http://www.co.marin.ca.us/depts/hh/main/eligibility/>



TOWN HALL MEETING

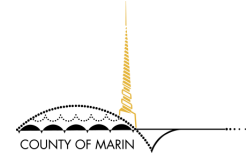
June 13, 2012

4:00pm-5:30pm

Marin Health & Wellness Campus

Provide feedback on the Integration Roadmap that will guide the consolidation of the Divisions of Mental health, Alcohol and Other Drugs, with Prevention Hub and Public Health Programs into a single Community Health Division.

For more information:
(415) 473-6873



Judy Arnold, Marin County Supervisor

DISTRICT 5 COUNTY CONNECTION NEWSLETTER

3501 Civic Center Drive
Suite 329
San Rafael, CA 94903
415.473.7331
www.co.marin.ca.us

District 5 Supervisor Aides:

Tanya Albert
talbert@marincounty.org
415.473.7371

Carolyn Glendening
cglendening@marincounty.org
415.473.7395

June 2012

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

July 2012

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Upcoming Meetings

- **June 4**—10am, Transit District Meeting
- **June 5**—Board of Supervisors Meeting
- **June 12**—Board of Supervisors Meeting
- **June 18**—9am, Budget Hearing
- **June 19**—Board of Supervisors Meeting
- **June 20**—9am, Budget Hearing
- **June 20**—1:30pm, SMART Board Meeting
- **June 26**—Board of Supervisors Meeting
- **June 28**—7pm, Transportation Authority of Marin Meeting
- **July 4**—County Holiday (offices closed)
- **July 10**—Board of Supervisors Meeting
- **June 16**—10am, Transit District Meeting
- **July 18**—1:30pm, SMART Board Meeting
- **July 24**—Board of Supervisors Meeting
- **July 26**—7pm, Transportation Authority of Marin 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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