



**Published in the Novato Advance  
January 17, 2018  
Volume 95, Number 3**

## **We accomplished a lot, now on to 2018**

Happy New Year! As we move into a new year, I want to take a moment to reflect on 2017. I am proud of the work we accomplished together this past year and want to share a few highlights with you:

Launched the first phase of SMART passenger rail service, 43 miles with 10 stations from the Sonoma County Airport to Downtown San Rafael. Ridership has been strong and construction of phase two is underway to connect to the Larkspur Ferry Terminal.

Approved a pilot program of AB 1421, Laura's Law, to expand our options to assist those suffering from mental illness. Combined with the increase of voluntary mental health services offered by Health & Human Services, we now have several tools available to reach those in need.

To help address the shortage of affordable rental units in Marin and to encourage the creation of room rentals within existing residences, the Board of Supervisors voted to waive building and planning fees over the next year for such rentals, called junior accessory dwelling units.

Transferred the operation of dental and specialty health clinics to the Marin Community Clinics. This effort led to enhanced healthcare and services to clinic patients, as well as \$2 million in annual savings to the County.

Opened the newly renovated Redwood & Grant Transit Facility, with improvements that make the location safer and more efficient for riders, drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists and buses.

Approved a delivery-only medicinal cannabis licensing ordinance, which establishes a regulatory framework and local delivery options for patients to safely access medicinal cannabis consistent with state law.

As we move into 2018, I look forward to continuing our work together and addressing items that are important to you. A few of my priorities include: emergency preparedness; traffic and transportation infrastructure; and opening the downtown Novato Theater.

With the terrible fire devastation our neighbors to the north experienced and then the fires in southern California, disaster preparedness is at the top of everyone's mind. It is imperative that we all take the time to be prepared, and I think we should take "advantage" of the interest and engagement that we are seeing now.

As chair of the Disaster Council, I will be working with a subcommittee I put together last year to enhance three recently identified proposals to improve emergency preparedness County-wide: re-energize Get Ready program, develop a school based continuum, and enhance Disaster Service Workers training and preparedness.

I also created a Fire Subcommittee of the Board of Supervisors to work with stakeholders to identify lessons learned from the North Bay Fires and develop a collaborative approach to reducing life and property loss in the event of a similar incident in Marin County. I look forward to continuing those efforts in the coming year.

As part of the next budget cycle, I will be suggesting that the County include Emergency Preparedness as one of our Board of Supervisors' priorities.

On the transportation front, we must continue efforts to ease traffic congestion and improve our transportation infrastructure.

We need to continue the expansion of SMART. As a SMART Board member, I am working to ensure we complete the San Rafael to Larkspur segment on schedule in 2019 and that we secure the needed funding to complete the entire 70-mile line.

I will continue to work with the Highway 37 Policy Committee to identify long term solutions to address sea level rise and traffic congestion on Highway 37.

We are closer than ever to completing the Marin Sonoma Narrows project. I will continue efforts to work with our State and Federal partners to complete this project.

And finally, there is no doubt that re-opening the Novato Theater is of enormous economic importance to Downtown Novato and will benefit the community as a whole. I am committed to seeing the Novato Theater open. Phase one of construction is complete and phase two includes the framing of the structure, completion of the roof and the front façade of the building. The Novato Theater will be highlighted at this year's annual City of Novato Birthday Bash, Paint the Town Red, on January 19 at the Buck Institute.

As always, please contact me if I can be of assistance to you: [jarnold@marincounty.org](mailto:jarnold@marincounty.org) or 415-473-7331.