

Willits Weekly

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A Nostalgic & Modern Record of Community and Life in Willits
 Donations Accepted Edition No. 541 **Thursday, March 14, 2024**

Brooktrails updated on plans for broadband

Barbara O'Reardon
 Reporter
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The Brooktrails Community Services District board meeting began with President Tina Tyler-O'Shea introducing the agenda item: "Tony Rakes on Fiber Optic Broadband Extension to Brooktrails." Third District Supervisor John Haschak then addressed the group and said: "At the last board meeting we talked about this broadband project and the grant that we are looking at, and fortunately we have three people here who have been deeply involved in working to get the broadband project established and underway:

Read the rest of **Brooktrails**
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Farmers Convergence returns March 19

Submitted by NCO

March 11 – North Coast Opportunities is excited to collaborate once again on the North Coast Farmers Convergence, held at Ridgewood Ranch on Tuesday, March 19. This annual event brings together food producers from Lake, Mendocino, Sonoma, and Humboldt counties (the North Coast region), along with local food retailers, chefs, food activists, and interested community members.

The North Coast Farmers Convergence is a celebration of the North Coast region's growing local food system and the vital profession of farming in Northern California. Each

Read the rest of **Convergence**
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James Ranch receives grant for conservation

Submitted by Mendocino Land Trust

The historic James Ranch 10 miles up Sherwood Road, the former home of Edgar and Stella James, in the former town of Sherwood, has taken another step toward being conserved and protected as a working ranch, the Mendocino Land Trust announced Tuesday.

"In partnership with the landowners of the James Ranch," the Mendocino Land Trust announced March 12, "the trust received a Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program grant. The grant will make it possible to acquire a conservation easement that will protect

Read the rest of **Conservation**
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Above, left: Pies are available on Pi Day, and every day, at Kemmy's Pies. Diamante-studded telephone pins were handed out to the Soroptimist International of Willits members in celebration of another completed phone book. Below: Soroptimist members smile together at Kemmy's Pie shop, celebrating the release of the 2024 phone book being distributed on March 14 – or 3.14, which has been deemed "Pi Day" – including, from left: Barbara O'Reardon; Heidi Ahders, Marilyn Harden, Vicki Ham, Kitty Norris and Marie Thompson.



Pi & Phone Book Day

Celebrate 3.14 Day with a slice of pie, and the 2024 Soroptimist International of Willits' 2024 Community Directory

March 14 has been dubbed "Pi Day" as the date, 3/14, is the first three numbers (3.14) in the sequence of Pi; which is the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter.

While math is all fun and good, enjoying a slice or a whole pie on Pi Day is a way for even the non-math fans of the world to celebrate.

Kemmy's Pies is offering a discount on Pi Day for those wishing to come into their shop located at 299 East Commercial Street, open Thursday from 6 am to 6 pm.

Another fun event on this particular Pi Day, is that the 2024 Soroptimist International of Willits' annual Community Telephone Directory will be available.

3,000 copies will be distributed through today's edition of Willits Weekly, and the other 1,000 copies will be placed at businesses around town.

Grab your copy, grab a slice, and enjoy!

– Maureen Jennison

At left, above: The menu of sweet and savory pies available at Kemmy's Pies. At left: Pie Tusseys are mini versions of the large-sized pies. Below: Come in to Kemmy's for a Pi Day discount - available on March 14, 2024.

Change at the Willits Chamber

By B.B. Kamoroff

"A change is gonna come," Sam Cooke sang some 60 years ago, and it could easily be the new theme song of the Willits Chamber of Commerce, which is going through a challenging period of change and reorganization.

At the February 28 Willits City Council meeting, volunteer directors of the chamber along with part-time coordinator Susan Mahoney presented a review of 2023 and plans for 2024 – plans that suddenly will no longer include Mahoney. Only a week after the council meeting, chamber president Lisa Kavasnik announced that Mahoney has resigned.

Mahoney, hired a year ago, oversaw a busy office that during 2023 involved 1,800 volunteer hours and answering 500 phone calls. But the chamber is saddled with an old computer that does not meet the community's needs and a poorly functioning web site, and its membership program is undergoing major restructuring.

One particular problem has been coordinating community events, so the

Read the rest of **Chamber**
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Election update and 100% snow pack

Jennifer Poole
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Mendocino County's March 5, 2024 primary election results were updated Tuesday afternoon. As of that March 12 report, the county has processed 12,208 ballots, with 10,090 ballots left to process. Numbers have changed a bit, but candidates and issues in the lead as of the Final Election Night Report are still in the lead.

In the closest local race, incumbent Second District Supervisor Maureen Mulheren has expanded her lead, with 51.94% (1,287 votes), compared to challenger Jacob Brown who is now at 48.06% (1,191 votes).

In Mendocino County's First Supervisorial District, candidate Madeline Cline is now leading with 56.53% of the vote (1,489 votes), and in the Fourth District, candidate Bernie Norvell is now leading with 81.19% of the vote (1,559 votes).

With the latest update to state Second Assembly District returns, Sonoma County Supervisor Chris

Read the rest of **Election**
 Over on Page 4

Mendocino County Fire Safe Council celebrates 20th anniversary

Submitted by MCFSC

The Mendocino County Fire Safe Council is 20 years old this year. Taking shape in 2003 and registered as a nonprofit in March 2004, MCFSC has responded to recent major wildfires with tremendous growth, activity and creative projects to promote wildfire preparedness and safety throughout Mendocino County.

In 2003, CAL FIRE was planning to close its Ukiah Air Attack Base, and a number of local residents successfully organized to change that plan. Two of these were Colin Wilson, then Anderson Valley fire chief and president of the Mendocino County Fire Chiefs Association, and Julie Rogers, who was the effort's volunteer coordinator and became MCFSC's founding executive director.

"I had recently worked on the Cedar Fire and was profoundly impacted by the huge losses in both lives and property," said Wilson. "That experience made me realize that good prevention work would be of much greater value in saving lives and property than the best fire-suppression response."

Rogers added: "Many county residents were completely relying on air tankers and fire engines to save their properties from fire, instead of taking action to prepare and defend their properties. Air tankers, though wonderfully helpful, were not always immediately available, and some remote properties were nearly an hour's drive from the nearest fire station. So, after our success (with CAL FIRE's Ukiah base), I asked Chief Wilson if Mendocino County had a citizen-based wildfire preparedness effort. He responded, 'No, but I wish we did.'"

"We agreed to stay in touch, went to a two-day Firewise training, at which we learned about the concept of fire safe councils, and began meeting with local fire chiefs toward creating such an organization for Mendocino County. Our first public meeting, in January 2004, garnered contributions of \$1,200, which was our operating budget for the next year."

With community support and involvement, the Mendocino County Fire Safe Council became a 501(c)(3) nonprofit in March 2004.

For its first few years, MCFSC operated on a shoestring budget, funded by the Allen-Heath Memorial Foundation and other sources. Realizing that more significant grants often require a Community Wildfire Protection Plan, MCFSC created Mendocino County's first protection plan in 2005. That document was updated in 2015, and the County of Mendocino is currently planning a new update.

The Pine Mountain Fire Safe Council near Willits was Mendocino County's first Neighborhood Fire Safe Council and is now also a certified Firewise Community. They received a significant early grant for chipping, mapping, signage and educational mailings. Lauren Robinson of Pine Ridge FSC/FWC acknowledges CAL FIRE Battalion Chief Mark Tolbert and BLM's Jeff Tunnell as particularly helpful in those days.

The Black Bart, Brooktrails (predecessor to Sherwood Firewise), and Robinson Creek Fire Safe Councils were other early active groups. However, Robertson notes, "Before the major wildfires in this county began in 2017, there were other directors but little money or impetus for building up a strong MCFSC."

In 2018, spurred by the October 2017 Redwood Complex Fire and other record-breaking wildfires sweeping through the state, the Mendocino County Resource Conservation District took MCFSC under its wing and took steps to reactivate it. Megan McClure, the Mendocino County Resource Conservation District executive director at the time, began to revive its funding and activities, and Scott Cratty was hired as MCFSC's executive director in January 2020.

Since then, MCFSC has become fully independent and active, gaining solid support from the County of Mendocino, the Community Foundation of Mendocino County, CAL FIRE, the State Coastal Conservancy, the California Fire Safe Council, PG&E, MCFSC members, and other supporters and funders. The number of its affiliated Neighborhood Fire Safe Councils has grown from 18 in 2019 to now over 70; MCFSC's annual budget is in the millions; it is now an employer with a staff of 10, including its own crew and equipment; and its programs continue to be expanded and created.

MCFSC's current programs and activities include: free community chipper days, home assessments, defensible-space assistance for income-eligible seniors and persons with disabilities; custom reflective address signs; micro-grants funding small, strategic wildfire-safety projects for Neighborhood Fire Safe Councils and fire departments; sponsorship and support of many kinds for its affiliated Neighborhood Fire Safe Councils.

MCFSC also provides abundant home-hardening and defensible-space information, including its own series of how-to videos, available on its ever-improving website, along with a list of local contractors, some of whom offer discounts to MCFSC members; targeted mapping projects; project-planning coordination with CAL FIRE, fire chiefs, Neighborhood Fire Safe Councils and other groups countywide; commitment to a forest-stewardship approach in its implementation projects; outreach in many forms including new or updated publications and mailings, radio interviews, a monthly newsletter, media articles, blog and Facebook posts, booths at community events; educational outreach to junior-high and high-school students; and more.

Twenty years from its founding, in a fast-changing world of environmental and other crises, a revitalized MCFSC continues to grow and strive to improve. Membership and donations to MCFSC (https://firesafemendocino.org/membership-options/) support its ongoing work in support of its mission: "To inform, empower and mobilize county residents to survive and thrive in wildfire-prone environments."

According to Nancy Armstrong-Frost, president of the board of directors, "MCFSC is committed to helping our community through whatever impacts severe weather and climate change may bring. The reinvigoration and growth of the MCFSC over the last five years has been tremendous. Leading our phenomenal staff, Executive Director Scott Cratty has been able to productively expand our programs and activities."

For more information, to donate and / or contact the Mendocino County Fire Safe Council, visit www.firesafemendocino.org or email admin@firesafemendocino.org.

Adventist Health Howard Memorial wins 'best in class' brand award

Submitted by Adventist Health Howard Memorial

March 5 – Adventist Health Howard Memorial has been recognized by Reputation, a global leader in reputation performance management, with its 800 Award.

A top recognition for location-level businesses with best-in-class brand reputation, Reputation's 800 Award highlights organizations that go above and beyond in delivering on brand promise by listening to and acting on feedback from their consumers.

"I am proud and grateful for our team at Howard Memorial and the work they do each day for our patients. As we listen to feedback from our community, answer questions both in-person and online, and understand the needs of our patients, we follow through on our promise to provide excellent patient-centered care while in our hospital and clinic space," said Linda Givens, administrator of Adventist Health Howard Memorial.

Locations that win the 800 Award consistently collect, analyze and apply consumer feedback, utilizing it to make data-driven decisions. Howard Memorial was recognized with the 2024 800 Award.

"In a world where consumers are making purchasing decisions based on what they see and hear in their local communities and online, delivering on brand performance is more important than ever. Adventist Health Howard Memorial has demonstrated its commitment to evolving alongside its customers by prioritizing their needs and taking action based on what they are saying across online reviews, rating pages and on social media," said Liz Carter, Reputation's chief marketing officer. "On behalf of Reputation, I extend an enthusiastic congratulations to Adventist Health Howard Memorial for its commitment to understanding consumer feedback and acting on it"

To determine 800 Award honorees, Reputation pulls a list of the Reputation Scores for every business location on the Reputation platform. Those that are honored will have achieved a score of 800 or higher due to their focus on high customer satisfaction throughout the past year.

The Reputation Score is a proprietary tool that measures review sentiment, volume, spread, recency, response, and length, along with brand reach and health, social engagement, business listing accuracy, and search impressions. For more information, please visit https://reputation.com/800-award/

Open enrollment now at Willits Elementary Charter

By Christine Felton, for WECS

Enrollment for grades K-5 is open at the free public charter school Willits Elementary Charter School until April 30, 2024. Space is limited, and students will be chosen by random lottery on May 3. Those who are not offered a spot will be placed on the waiting list.

The school has been a part of the Willits education community since 2012 when parents and volunteers transformed a dirt lot on the corner of Lenore and Commercial streets into a school offering art, music, Spanish, gardening, science explorations, and field trips in addition to traditional academic subjects. An afterschool program is provided, offering homework help and a variety of hands-on enrichment activities.

Under the leadership of the current director, Charlene Bredder, staff and teachers continue to provide research-based education and support for the social and emotional health of its students. The school's literacy program, developed by kindergarten teacher and reading specialist Ashley Sherf, is based on strategies aligned with the Science of Reading.

Last year, WECS ranked among the top three elementary schools in Mendocino County for the number of students meeting or exceeding the state standards in English and Math, according to the statewide California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress website. At the 2024 Willits Science Fair, 11 WECS student projects advanced to the county level.

Unlike some charter schools, WECS is not affiliated with a corporation; it is overseen by the Charter School Association of Willits. Although people unfamiliar with the school may assume that parents pay tuition or are required to donate time, there is no tuition and no requirement for parental volunteer hours. There, however, are many opportunities for parents and guardians to participate in their children's education, including volunteering, chaperoning, joining a planning committee, or contributing in other ways to the success of the school.

For information about enrolling, call the WECS office at 707-459-1400.

Senior Center menu for the week

Willits Senior Center is serving lunch in its indoor dining room, and continues to serve drive-through and walk-up lunches, too. Lunch is available Monday through Friday, from 12 to 12:45 pm, inside and outside the Senior Center, 1501 Baechtel Road. Lunches are \$8; \$7.50 for a 10 lunch card for Senior Center members.

Thursday, March 14: Grilled Chicken, Green Salad, Garlic Bread

Friday, March 15: Corned Beef & Cabbage

Monday, March 18: Beer Battered Cod, Rice Pilaf, Veggies, Roll

Tuesday, March 19: Pepperoni Mushroom Olive Pizza, Green Salad

Wednesday, March 20: Corned Beef Hash, Eggs, Biscuit, Fruit

Thursday, March 21: BLT, Macaroni Salad, Pickle

Friday, March 22: Hot Dog w/Chili, Macaroni Salad

Activities: Bingo every Friday night, 5 to 7 pm. Exercise

class every weekday morning from 9 to 10 am.

Pancake Breakfast: every second Sunday, 8 to 11 am.

Meals on Wheels: The Senior Center Meals on Wheels program delivers lunch Monday through Friday. To sign up call Joliana at 459-6826, who can help fill out the application form. Call 459-6826 the day before needed to schedule home meal delivery. Delivered throughout Willits.

Transportation for seniors: Call 459-5556 to schedule. Pick up and drop off for grocery shopping, banking, doctors' appointments. Senior Center Thrift Shop: 459-2176

The Senior Center is in need of volunteers to help with the many activities here at the center, including volunteer Meals on Wheels drivers. "Volunteers are one-third of our workforce, which allows us to offer many services to our members and community." To learn more about volunteering: 459-6826.

At right: Dog owners and enthusiasts John Haschak and Stephanie Garrabrant-Sierra confer about their animals. Three charcuterie boards from Ken Knight are offered in the silent auction. Ambria Zenitar, pub manager, attaches a sign so people on the street will know what is occurring inside. Below: The crew, volunteers, and Shanachie Pub customers pose for a group portrait at the end of the evening.



Photos by Mathew Caine



Spring Fling

Having a good time at Shanachie Pub while fundraising for and learning about the Humane Society for Inland Mendocino County

The shelters in Mendocino County are overrun with a host of dogs and cats. They are at-capacity and were it not for a robust fostering program, the shelters would have to take drastic measures to ensure the health and well-being of the animals. With this in mind, Pete Swanton and Shanachie Pub held one of their Humane Society of Inland Mendocino County fundraisers.

The Spring Fling event was held on Saturday from 1 to 5 pm. It was an opportunity to share information about the facility and how to adopt or foster, to accept donations, sell branded items for sale, hold a silent auction, and to rub Rupert the dog's tummy at \$1 a session.

"We come out and do events and try to make the public aware of what we do and where we're located," explained John King, president of the HSIMC board. "We're actually a rescue and adoption center out of Redwood Valley. We're basically a 'no-kill' shelter. We get about 500 each of dogs and cats per year that we rescue and adopt."

"Currently, we have something between 150 to 250 animals at the shelter. A lot of them have been fostered out so they're not currently at the shelter. Most of our dogs are fostered out, so at any given time there are approximately 18 dogs on site, but we have maybe 80 under our care."

"One of the things we do is come out and give presentations to various groups and talk about the Humane Society," King said. "We're presenting to Willits Rotary on the 21st of this month. We have a short 25-minute presentation. We go through our history, what we do, and how we do it, let people get familiar with us."

"If someone wants to adopt," said King, "they can go online and fill out an application or you can come down to the shelter to fill out an application. Once we get the application, we do a little vetting on it and then they can adopt. What a lot of people do is foster first to see if the animal is compatible with their home, people and lifestyle. We make sure that all the animals are spayed or neutered, have their vaccines, and they are microchipped. Once we complete all that, then we can transfer ownership of the animal."

Once every three months, the Humane Society does an adoption event with lower affordable adoption fees which cover spaying and neutering, vaccinations, and chipping. They struggle to find homes for the older animals, so with that in mind, dogs over 7 years are offered for free. They still have

Read the rest of HSIMC Over on page 9



THE BUNNY IS BACK!

PHOTOS WITH THE EASTER BUNNY!

SUNDAY, MARCH 24

from 12 to 4 pm at J.D. Redhouse

Digital images by Maureen Jennison are just \$5 each!

No appointments, just come by and get in line!

The snugly, live bunnies are back too!



Above, left: Rupert brought in an extra \$67, by charging \$1 for the opportunity to rub his belly. Above, right: Jakob Foley of Northspur Brewing Co. and Pete Swanton of Shanachie Pub share a beer and a conversation. Below, left: Theresa King, secretary of the Humane Society Board of Directors, brought her pet, Lacey, to enjoy the festivities. Below, right: A book of animals available for adoption from the Humane Society is on hand to peruse. Below, right, bottom: Shanachie Pub Manager Ambria Zenitar brought her dog, Rupert, to help raise money.



ST. PATRICK'S DAY

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Gene Roediger

Gene Roediger passed peacefully at home on March 5, living 77 adventurous years. He lived in Southern California, married Dorothy in 1966, worked in tool and die, subsistence farmed in Missouri, moved back to California and worked at Flying Tigers, moved to Willits in 1974, worked at Woodruff Chevrolet then in the woods as a gyppo logger, then at Pacific Coast Timber.

Gene was a charter member of Roots of Motive Power. He and Dorothy sailed the Pacific Coast, Alaska in the summer, and Mexico in the winter; they also, boated the Erie and Canadian Canals and the Hudson River and Manhattan Island.

They worked as wagon masters and led RV caravans to Copper Canyon, Mexico, Belize, and the Canadian Maritimes. Gene built two of their homes. They toured Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Panama, the Amazon River, and China.

Gene leaves Dorothy, son Chris, daughter Mary (Troy) James, sister Judy (Michael) McDonald, brothers Henry (Cheryl), John (Sharon), and Tim (deceased). six grandkids, and 11 great grandkids.

The folks in Missouri used to say, "That Gene, he can weld anything but a moonbeam"!

The family suggests memorial donations to the Willits Senior Center or Roots of Motive Power. Celebration of his life is planned for this summer.

St. Patrick's Day Feast, March 16

American Legion-Willits Post #174 presents the Duane Brown Memorial St. Patrick's Day, Corned Beef & Cabbage Feast, Saturday, March 16 from 5 to 7 pm.

Enjoy Corned Beef & Cabbage, Murphy's (Spuds), Carrots, etc. plus dessert, at the Veterans Memorial Building, 191 North Main Street in Willits.

Tickets are \$25 per adult, \$12 per child under 12, and free for kids under 5. Tickets may be purchased at the door.



Enthusiastic Aquaria

Introducing the shining star of our shelter, the one and only Aquaria! This adorable girl is bursting with wonderful energy that will brighten anyone's day. Despite a rough past that left her starving and alone in the wilderness of Willits, Aquaria holds no grudges and still knows how to love unconditionally.

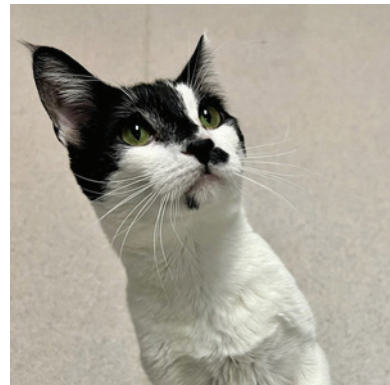
One of Aquaria's best qualities is her incredible zest for life! She approaches every day with boundless enthusiasm and a wagging tail that never stops. Whether it's chasing after tennis balls or zooming around the play yards with her canine friends, this playful pooch knows how to make every moment count.

The Humane Society for Inland Mendocino is located at 9700 Uva Drive in Redwood Valley. Feel free to visit us, no appointments needed! We are open Wednesday through Friday, 1 to 5 pm; Saturday and Sunday, 11 am to 3 pm; closed Monday and Tuesday. Check out all of our available dogs and cats on our website: www.mendohumanesociety.com, on our Facebook page, and on www.petfinder.com.

Family-man Kimber

Kimber is your typical playful young cat! He is also sweet and enjoys affection. Like all new pets when introduced to a new home / environment, Kimber may need some time to adjust, but we think he would make a great family cat!

The Mendocino County Animal Shelter, located at 298 Plant Road in Ukiah, is open to the public from noon to 5 pm Tuesday through Friday and 10 am to 3 pm (closed for lunch from 1 to 1:30 pm) on Saturdays. Make sure to pre-fill out the adoption application available at www.mendoanimalshelter.com. Call 707-467-6453 for more information.



Entertaining Ricki

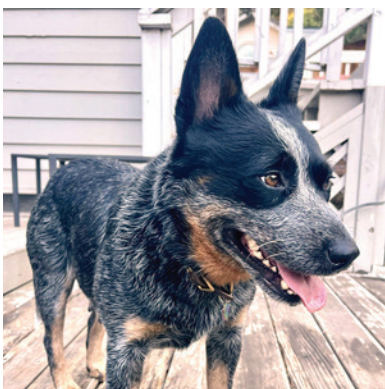
Ricki is a compact little cattle dog with enthusiastic energy that says, "let's go do stuff ... together!" Ricki loves people and gets along with other dogs. She is playful but not hyper. She is a dream on-leash, staying right by your side, never pulling. She wants to be with you, staying with you, following you from room to room, and would love to sleep on the bed. She is house-trained.

All that said, Ricki would be best as the only dog in a household. She gets along with other dogs, but when left alone with canine friends, has gotten herself into mischief from time to time. She needs a family who will provide lots of exercise and stimulation for her to keep her happy.

Ricki is loaded with personality and really would love to be your special girl. She will shower her family with love, loyalty and entertainment.

To learn more about Ricki, or to view other adoptable animals, visit www.milofoundation.org or the Milo

Foundation Sanctuary Facebook page. The sanctuary is currently doing pet adoptions by appointment only. Please complete a pet-adoption application before requesting an appointment. You can reach the Milo Foundation at 459-4900.



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March 16, 2024
5:00 PM - 7:00 PM
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The Best of Lake and Mendocino presented by Bicoastal Media is a vote-based contest for individuals and businesses that serve Lake County, CA, and Mendocino County, CA. Nominations are provided by the community and after the nomination period is completed, the names of nominated businesses in each of the categories are finalized and make up the official Best of Lake and Mendocino voting ballot. The audience can then vote on one choice in each category. Voters are allowed to nominate without limits and once the voting period has begun, one vote per category per 24-hour period is allowed. Listing in this publication and/or award is not a guarantee of future investment success. This recognition should not be construed as an endorsement of the advisor by any client. No compensation was provided directly or indirectly by the recipient for participation or in connection with obtaining or using the third-party rating or award.

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