



# What do YOU think?

Opinions, thoughts and thank you letters from our readers

## It's just 1 cent...

To the Editor:

It appears property taxes, fuel taxes (of which we have always paid about \$2 more than the rest of the nation), vehicle registration fees, license fees, state and federal grants (from taxes we have paid) don't provide enough revenue for a community's survival. Taking from one group's fund to solve the financial needs of a different group is as amusing as musical chairs . . . except when road work, food bank, health care, elders, and others don't have a chair when the music stops.

If citizens are, as usual, asked to pay more taxes to save the moment . . . will this tax request be a firm commitment to its goals? Will it be written clearly assigning this tax to only be used for material for "community" road repair of existing roads. This funding should not pay any worker time, no planning time, no outside contractors. There are county workers who should be able to do this work with the materials only from any additional tax.

Any need on a larger contractor level than that would seem to be a situation that this new tax would not cover. And, other remedies would need to be sought, other than this tax increase.

David Pollin, Willits

## Superior Court announces photo contest for new Ukiah courthouse

Submitted by Mendocino County Superior Court

The Mendocino County Superior Court welcomes photographers – professional, amateur and hobbyists – to donate their best work for possible display in the new Ukiah Courthouse, slated to open in the summer of 2027. Contestants must be residents of Mendocino County.

With so much natural artistic talent in the county, the court wants to highlight and recognize the many accomplished photographers that capture the essence of Mendocino County – its history, its natural beauty, and its people. The court is seeking photo submissions in the following categories:

1. Mendocino Coastline
2. Mendocino Redwoods
3. Significant Mendocino Landmarks
4. Tribal Communities in Mendocino
5. People of Mendocino County, past and present
6. Wildlife – Birds, Marine Life, Animals
7. Mendocino Agriculture and Industry

The deadline to submit photos is July 31, 2026. The top two photos in each category will be reproduced for display in the new building. The court will size and hang the winning photographs in the public areas of the new courthouse. The title of the photo and the photographer's name will be placed next to each photo to recognize their work.

A panel of experts from museums and art schools will rate each of the photos. All contestants will be notified in August or September of the winning photos.

To learn more about how to submit photos, please visit the Superior Court's website at <https://www.mendocino.courts.ca.gov/new-ukiah-courthouse-photography-contest> for additional information.

## The Rules: LETTERS

Letters & Commentaries: Email letters to [willitsweekly@gmail.com](mailto:willitsweekly@gmail.com). Willits Weekly prints letters and commentaries about Willits and Third District issues, activities, events, and people. We print letters to the editor from residents of Willits and the Third District only. To encourage a variety of voices, Willits Weekly limits letter publication from any one writer to once every four weeks.

Letters and commentaries must be submitted with a name, address and phone number, although only the author's name and city of residence will be published. Deadline is end of day Monday for each Thursday edition. No letters from an anonymous source will be published, although a request to withhold the writer's name will be considered.

**Willits Weekly**  
A Heritage & History Record of Community and Life in Willits

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## Milo Sanctuary Spring Cleaning Weekend

Hello from Milo Sanctuary outside of Willits! It's Spring Cleaning, Painting, and Fun with dogs and cats time!! Volunteer Weekend is April 16 to 19, with the focus on Saturday and Sunday but folks are invited to come stay!! We have a guest house, and lots of camping spots available! Car camp, tent camp, RV ... we have one.

Milo will supply tools (though if you have – sure, bring!). We have some plants to get in the ground, two painting projects, one indoors (Cat House) and quite a few Dog Shelters outdoors needing paint.

And our guesthouse "The Yonder House" needs some grounds clean up, loading up for a dump run, organization.... The house is rustic and on a beautiful site, down a ways from "Milo Central" and quiet. Dog-friendly dogs are welcome!!

We will go to the pond, the creek ... barbecue, provide some snacks and beverages, talk Milo, dogs and cats!! If you love and support Milo, if you love being in the country ... getting dirty, helping animals – Sign up today!

We are looking for up to 20 people. Email [sanctuary@milofoundation.org](mailto:sanctuary@milofoundation.org) or talk to Sanctuary manager Amy at 707-459-4900.

## NCO's Caring Kitchen program to close April 20

Posted at [www.ncoinc.org](http://www.ncoinc.org)

After careful review, North Coast Opportunities has determined that we do not have the funding necessary to continue the Caring Kitchen program beyond this spring.

Caring Kitchen will close on April 30, 2026, with meal preparation and delivery continuing through April 24, completing the current service period.

This is a difficult transition. Caring Kitchen has been shaped by the care, time, and commitment of dedicated volunteers and staff. Because of their efforts, community members have received not only nourishing meals, but also connection, dignity, and consistency. That impact will continue to be felt throughout our community.

While this change has been part of ongoing conversations, we recognize the significance of this moment. Caring Kitchen has meant a great deal to many people.

NCO explored potential partnerships to continue meal delivery locally. At this time, Ceres Community Project will not be expanding services into Mendocino County. We will continue to stay connected to opportunities that support food access and will share updates if additional options emerge.

NCO remains committed to supporting food access for our most vulnerable community members and will continue to look for ways to advance this work.

We extend our sincere gratitude to everyone who has been part of Caring Kitchen. It has truly been an honor to support this work alongside our community.

We want to take a moment to honor the story of Caring Kitchen.

Caring Kitchen began in Willits in 2017, rooted in a simple but powerful belief that nourishing food, prepared with care, can be part of healing. From the beginning, April Cunningham and Tarney Sheldon brought that vision to life, building a program that connected nutritious meals, volunteer service, and community care.

What made Caring Kitchen so special was never just the food. It was the way people came together around it: Volunteers preparing meals, teens learning skills and compassion alongside adults, local partners supporting the work, and

Read the rest of **Kitchen** | *Over on page 13*

## THIRD DISTRICT SUPERVISOR'S UPDATE

# April 2026

By Supervisor John Haschak

Mendocino County's budget looks better than previously expected. Instead of \$16 million or \$10 or \$5 million in the red, the county is looking at \$3-4 million budget gap for next fiscal year. The budget will be discussed now until June when a balanced budget will be adopted.

Candidate Forums are coming up for the 3rd District Supervisorial race. These debates are useful ways to see and get to know the candidates, hear why they want the job, and what their vision is for the district and county. The first one in Willits is on April 19 from 4 to 6 pm at the Grange. Much appreciation to all the groups that are helping put this together. Stay tuned in for other forums in the district.

The board passed the first reading of a noise ordinance to limit excessive and disturbing noise. It was brought forward originally by Supervisor McGourty in September of 2024. After the ordinance passes, it will give law enforcement a tool to deal with some of the egregious, unpermitted concerts, raves, amplified music into the wee hours that disrupt the well-being of communities. Code enforcement and the Sheriff's Office will be able to issue infraction citations, impose administrative penalties, or take other enforcement action.

Several years ago, the board passed a resolution to modernize the mission of the Jackson Demonstration State Forest. It became part of our legislative platform. Assemblymember Rogers introduced AB 2494 which is in alignment with our platform. It will redefine management of forest lands to include maximizing the promotion of climate resiliency goals, enhanced outdoor access, protecting biodiversity, and compatible research efforts. This was debated by the board and a letter of support was approved.

There will be a Talk with the Supervisor on Thursday, April 9, from 10 to 11 am at Brickhouse Coffee. You can always contact me at [haschakj@mendocinocounty.gov](mailto:haschakj@mendocinocounty.gov) or call 707-972-4214.

## Senior Center menu for the week

Willits Senior Center is serving lunch in its indoor dining room, Monday through Friday, from 11:45 am to 1 pm. Drive-through lunches are available from 12 to 12:45 pm, outside the Senior Center, 1501 Baechtel Road.

Thursday, April 2: Meatball Sub Sandwich

Friday, April 3: Reuben Sandwich

Monday, April 6: Chicken Salad Sandwich

Tuesday, April 7: Lasagna w/Meat Sauce

Wednesday, April 8: Italian Sub Sandwich

Thursday, April 9: Chili Relleno Casserole

Friday, April 10: Ham Dinner w/Sides

Sunday, April 12: Pancake Breakfast

Activities: Bingo on Friday nights, 5 to 7 pm. Exercise class weekday mornings from 9 to 10 am.

**Meals on Wheels:** The Senior Center Meals on Wheels program delivers lunch Monday through Friday, excepting holidays. 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.

**Pancake Breakfast:** Second Sunday of the month from 8:30 to 11:30 am. Menu choices: 1) Biscuits & gravy with scrambled eggs. 2) All-you-can-eat pancakes with scrambled eggs, sausage or bacon. Breakfast includes coffee, orange juice or milk. Adults \$13; Senior Center members \$12; Children 8 and under \$8. Proceeds benefit Nutritional, Transportation, and Outreach services for Willits seniors.

Adults \$13; Senior Center members \$12; Children 8 and under \$8 and benefits Nutritional, Transportation, and Outreach services for Willits seniors.

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.

# Chili Cookoff

Bribery, beans, and fun at annual Willits Senior Center Fundraiser for Meals on Wheels

How many different kinds of chili are out there? After spending a couple of hours at the Willits Senior Center Chili Cookoff, it seems the varieties are endless. Whether it was an old family recipe, an experiment with new and intriguing ingredients, or something totally made up, all the concoctions at the Chili Cookoff had

at least one thing in common, beans (although beans are not technically a requirement for chili). Many entries made use of pinto beans, kidney beans, or black beans, mostly with some kind of tomato sauce, and peppers of some sort. Some chefs included ground beef, steak, or chicken, while there were some vegetarian varieties as well. Some of the chilis had a spicy bite to them, but some were sweet or mild.

The attendees, many of whom brought muffin tins to arrange their samples, were encouraged to choose their favorite chili as well as their favorite decorated table. Several of the chili teams had spent a considerable amount of time and talent in the design and construction of their table displays. The Brooktrails Fire Department won the trophy for Best Decorated Table, with their fiery motif, festooned with seemingly flaming objects that gave it a red-hot look.

One of the most unusual and innovative chilis belonged to Chef Adam Celaya of the Brooktrails Golf Course Back 9 Bistro. It surprisingly was based on hot dill pickles, and although it sounded strange, it quickly became one of the favorite chilis, with people expressing their revelation at how tasty it actually was. When asked for his ingredients, Celaya recited: "Hot dill pickles, chili, meat and beans, tomato, red and green bell peppers, smoked paprika, onions. I like to create out of the box."

Maryann Grunseth and Flynn Mahoney, a couple who have an affinity for fostering feline pets, had a cat-themed table, with cat stickers and inflatable kitties. "We just like cats. We foster cats. We found out that if two percent of cat owners fostered once a year, there would never be a need for euthanasia in shelters. So, we're big fans of fostering," said Grunseth. Mahoney added, "It's a white chicken chili, kind of against the grain a little bit. It has smoked chicken and it's more of a kind of a creamy chili than is traditional. It has green peppers in it which gives it a bit of spice. There are no cats in the chili."

James and Lila McLain brought their "Devilish Delight Chili. My ingredients are a secret," said James McLain. "Three different meats, three different types of chili, two different types of beans. That's as far as I'm going to go." There was a "Milk Available" sign on the table to help cool down the intensity.

Carlo of Rolling Temptations, a pop-up and catering business out of Ukiah, brought a Filipino taste to his chili. "This is a chili I made for 12 or 14 hours. It will have an Asian flavor to it," explained Carlo, who also brought crispy spring rolls, called lumpia, to augment the chili.

Scott Frederick of Commercial Tire and Auto stated, "We're going to definitely try to win this competition. We have some elbow grease and car parts in the chili. We brought more chili this year because last year we ran out. Shayla Bandaff, our service writer, made the chili."

Little Lake Fire Department was represented by Deana Rutledge, who explained that the chili was created by

Read the rest of **Chili** | *Over on page 15*

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At top, left: Sue Sawyers and Dorothy Roediger of the Senior Center Board of Directors serve beer floats and other tasty treats to go along with the chili. At top, right: The Brooktrails Fire Department crew stands behind their booth, which won the award for the Best Decorated Table. Above, left: Many of the attendees brought muffin pans from home in order to carry all their chili samples. Above, right: Councilmember Matthew Alaniz, one of the Chili Cookoff judges, is just getting started filling his muffin tin. Below, left: Flynn Mahoney and Maryann Grunseth created a cat-related table to bring awareness to the need for cat fosters. Below, right: Chef Adam Celaya, of the Brooktrails Golf Course's Back 9 Bistro, ladles out his hot dill pickle chili. At bottom, left: The Willits Lions Club brought a chili made by member Jim Holmes. At bottom, right: Chef Carlo, of Rolling Temptations, winner of the People's Choice trophy, prepares his Filipino-style chili tasters.

Photos by Mathew Caine



At far left: Three generations of chili enthusiasts sample the entries: from left, Alana Turner, left, Sandy Turner and Breanna Constancia, right. A stuffed lion, from one of the tables, seems prepared to enjoy one of the samples.

Online & Print

**Willits Weekly**  
EST. 2013

A Nostalgic & Modern Record of Community and Life in Willits

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# SPIRITUAL PATHWAYS

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290 S. Lenore Ave.  
Willits, CA 95490  
Where love is first and the Bible is central.  
Sunday Services: 10:00 a.m. - Worship  
Adult Sunday School 8:30 a.m.  
Info? 707-459-1905  
www.agapebiblechurch.com

**Amazing Grace Assembly of God Church**  
803 Coast Street  
P.O. Box 489, Willits  
Worship Service - 5:00 p.m.  
Pastor Kris Strickland  
EVERYBODY IS WELCOME

**Church of Christ**  
"What must we do to be saved?"  
Acts 2:37  
1095 S. Main St., Willits  
(next to Super 8)  
(707) 459-5023  
Sunday Bible Study-10:00 a.m.  
Sunday Worship-11:00 a.m.  
Sunday Evening Service-6:00 p.m.  
Wednesday Bible Study-7:00 p.m.

**The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints**  
265 Margie Drive  
Willits, CA 95490  
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**Grace Community Church**  
Celebrating Life In Christ  
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For appointments call:  
(707) 459-3106

**St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church**  
61 W. San Francisco Ave.  
Willits, CA 95490  
Father Aaron Bandanadam  
Mass times:  
Wednesday-Friday 9:00 a.m.  
Saturday-5:30 p.m.  
Sunday-9:00 a.m. - English  
10:30 a.m. - Spanish  
Confessions on Saturday  
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707-459-2252  
https://stanthonywillits.org/  
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**St. Francis Episcopal Church**  
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707-272-0177  
Sunday Service - 10 a.m.  
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ALL ARE WELCOME  
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**St. John Lutheran Church**  
Sunday Service  
10:00 a.m.  
(707) 459-2988  
24 Mill Creek Drive  
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**Willits Seventh-Day Adventist Church**  
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Worship Service - 10:45 a.m.  
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Wednesday  
Prayer Meeting - 7:00 p.m.  
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www.willitsumc.org  
Facebook: facebook.willits.unc

If you want to be included in this column please call:  
**April Tweddell**  
(707) 972-2475  
april@willitsweekly.com



**Good Friday Service at St Francis Church:** Join us for prayer, the reading of the Passion, and Holy Communion at noon, with the church remaining open for private prayer and meditation until 2 pm on Friday, April 3 at St Francis in the Redwoods Episcopal Church, Willits.

**Create It, Make It, Break It STEM Activity at Library:** This month is all about the magic of seeds with this week's activity 'Seeds and Sizes' on Friday, April 3 from 3:30 to 5 pm at the library. Ages 9 to 14.

**Emerald Triangle Tour at Shanachie Pub:** Friday, April 3 at 8 pm. Featuring singer/songwriter and Americana artist Tom Freund, guitarist/singer/songwriter Steven Bates, and Latchkey, "an invigorating twist on the Northern California festival vibe." 50 South Main Street.

## Thursday, April 2

**Willits Farmers Market:** One last week at the Grange before moving to City Park April 9. Join your neighbors Thursday, April 2 from 3 to 5:30 pm for the freshest produce available, local meat, farm fresh eggs, hot and cold food from local businesses, along with crafts, live music, the new edition of Willits Weekly, and more. The market honors EBT and WIC cards and matches benefits to double your dollars.

**Free Food at Mendo Food Network:** First Thursday of each month (excluding federal holidays) receive free food from 10 to 11:30 at 1250 Blosser Lane, Willits.

## Maundy Thursday Service at St Francis Church:

All are welcome as we remember the last supper and Jesus's mandate to his disciples to love one another as he has loved them, on Thursday, April 2 at 6 pm at St Francis in the Redwoods Episcopal Church, Willits.

## Friday, April 3

**Bake Sale Fundraiser at the Senior Center:** Save yourself some time and pick up your Easter desserts at this bake sale to raise funds for the Senior Center on Friday, April 3 from 8:30 am to 1 pm at the Willits Senior Center.



## Saturday, April 4

**Willits Redwood Little League Opening Day Ceremony:** Teams arrive at 8 am, ceremony starts at 8:30 am on Saturday, April 4 at the Little League Fields, East Commercial Street. Baseball games all day long after ceremony. Cash calendar drawing for \$500 on opening day.

**Indoor Easter Egg Hunt at Willits Kids' Corner:** Bring the kids for Easter fun to one of three sessions which will each feature an egg hunt, coloring station, raffle and photo opportunities with the Beagle Easter Dog on Saturday, April 4 with sessions from 10 am to noon, 1 to 3 pm and 4 to 6 pm at 90 South Main Street. Cost is \$10 per child (\$5 for WKC members), and space is limited so reserve your session by calling 707-615-5963 or visit willitskidscorner.com.

**Easter Egg Hunt & Community Gathering at Mendo Redwoods RV:** A day of family fun, starting with an Easter Egg Hunt which will be divided into three sections by age group, plus enjoy the hiking trails, Mini and Disc Golf and the animal sanctuary. This free event is from

10 am to 2 pm, with egg hunt starting at 10 am, on Saturday, April 4 at Mendocino Redwoods RV Resort, 1600 Highway 20, Willits.

**Easter Vigil at St Francis Church:** All are welcome to attend a short service of prayers at 10 am and the Easter Vigil at 6 pm which will include kindling a new fire to light the Paschal candle, readings, prays, songs, Holy Communion and the first proclamation of Easter on Sunday, April 4 at St Francis in the Redwoods Episcopal Church, Willits.

**Garry Colson and String Creek Artisans at WCA:** Join Willits Center for the Arts for the reception for the April exhibits, Saturday, April 4 from 6 to 8 pm: "A celebration of art & community, with snacks and beverages." Showcasing Willits artist Garry Colson, whose paintings explore landscapes, animals, and still life in the north gallery, with a group of Willits artists and craftspeople known as the String Creek Artisans, whose work includes fabric collage, drawing and painting, weaving, fine woodworking, textiles, assemblage, and musical instruments, in the south gallery. Galleries are open Fridays through Sundays from 11 am to 5 pm. Willits Center for the Arts is located at 71 East Commercial Street. More info on new website: www.willitscenterforthearts.org.

**Tom Relling Band at Shanachie Pub:** Saturday, April 4 at 8 pm. Tom Relling's "hard rock spin on power-pop merges clever lyrics, catchy melodies, and stunning high-energy guitar-based rock n'roll." 50 South Main Street.

## Sunday, April 5

### Happy Easter!

**Easter Sunrise Service at the Cross on Sherwood Road:** All are welcome at this community event of singing, prayer, and a Bible message followed by a hot breakfast at Bruce Burton's barn on Sunday, April 5 at 6:30 am. Bring a camp chair if you'd like



to sit, and dress warmly. In the event of rain, service will be held in the barn. If you would like to volunteer to bring a dish to share, help as a parking attendant, or clean up after, please text Steve Thrift at 707-621-3865

**Easter Service and Egg Hunt at St Francis Church:** All are welcome to attend the service and joyful celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus, followed by an Easter egg hunt for the children and a potluck feast on Sunday, April 5 at 10 at St Francis in the Redwoods Episcopal Church, Willits.

## Wednesday, April 8

**Second Chance Pet Program:** Second Wednesdays at the Willits Food Bank, 344 Railroad Avenue, from 11 am to 2 pm. "We provide items to folks in need of food, flea and tick meds, beds, leashes, collars, harnesses, food dishes for their dogs and cats. Donations of new or lightly used pet items are very much appreciated! We have drop off spots at Sparetime Garden Center, Dip n Dazzle Pet Grooming, and JD Redhouse."

**2MuchFun! at Brickhouse Coffee:** Wednesday lunchtime live music series features 2MuchFun! with Dave Pierce, Vocals, Guitar, Synths, and Paul Haley, Vocals, Guitar, Keys, brewing up more of your musical faves. Wednesday, April 8 at noon at Brickhouse Coffee, 3 South Main Street.

## Thursday, April 9

**Willits Farmers Market:** First week at City Park for the summer. Join your neighbors Thursday, April 9 from 3 to 5:30 pm for the freshest produce available, local meat, farm fresh eggs, hot and cold food from local businesses, along with crafts, live music, the new edition of Willits Weekly, and more. The market honors EBT and WIC cards and matches benefits to double your dollars.

## Friday, April 10

**'Comedy for a Cause-Sober Grad Edition' at Noyo Theater:** 5th annual fundraiser will benefit Willits High School's Sober Graduation with headliner Marc Yaffee, co-star of the historic Showtime special, "Goin' Native" and featuring Becky Lynn, a fixture in the Northern California comedy scene. Plus, the comic stylings of Jacob Blaeseer, Mendo County's own singer/songwriter Neveah Travis, and hosted by "The Bern Man" Jake Bernie. Doors open at 6 pm on Friday, April 10 at the Noyo Theater. Tickets are \$30; reserve your seat before they sell out at Eventbrite.com or Allevents.in/willits

**WCA Art Talk on Winslow Homer:** Willits Center for the Arts April Art Talk is on Winslow Homer (1836 to 1910) "one of the greatest painters of the 19th century." Friday, April 10 at 6:30 pm at WCA, 71 East Commercial St. More info: www.willitscenterforthearts.com

**Towse at Shanachie Pub:** Friday, April 10 at 8 pm. This London based duo with violin, piano and two voices plays feelings-forward-folk-pop with a sense of humor and theatrical energy. 50 South Main Street.

## Saturday, April 11

**Food Security Town Hall Meeting #3:** "Our next steps -from ideas to actions," Saturday, April 11 from 11 am to 1 pm at the Little Lake Grange, 291 School Street. "Farmers, we need you! We need more land for farming and backyard gardens... Come to be part of the solution - how to feed our community in these uncertain times." Food Bank collection bin on site.

**Celebrating Young Poets at WCT:** Starlight Poetry series features Mendocino County Poet Anika Snyder, "is a vibrant 25-year-old whose poetry takes inspiration from famed humorists like Dorothy Parker, Kurt Vonnegut, and Joseph Heller," along with several Willits High School students at the Willits Community Theatre Playhouse, 37 West Van Lane, Saturday, April 11 at 7 pm. Open mic follows. Entry by donation; no one turned away for lack of funds.



## 1990s Adult Prom

Willits Women in Business are hosting an Adult Prom at the Willits Community Center - Back to the '90s! Nostalgia, dancing, drinks, and fun, 7 to 11 pm. 18+ years are welcome! \$39 tickets - purchase online or in-person at Willits Power, Monkey Wrench or Humm MedSpa. A portion of proceeds will fund a scholarship for a local high school senior. More info: https://willitswomeninbusiness.com/

## Steve Eberhard's photos featured at the Pub

Willits photographer Steve Eberhard's photos are featured at the Shanachie Pub as part of their 20th anniversary celebration in April. "We're gearing up to start celebrating our 26th anniversary on April 15, and thought that the best way to celebrate is with an homage to the past! You'll see familiar faces in the crowds and rocking the stage, so be sure to come check out the snapshots he's captured of the pub's heyday! Find more of Eberhard's photography at www.photocogitator.com



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**CUB SCOUT INFO MEET & GREET**  
APRIL 22 · 6:30PM  
Scout Hut - Rec Grove Park Willits, CA  
Come learn about Cub Scouts and help start a new pack in our community!  
Parents & kids are welcome. Sign up that night if you'd like to join. There will be snacks and a fun activity for kids during the meeting!  
Scouting America

**BRICKHOUSE COFFEE LIVE MUSIC**  
APR 1 TWINING TIME  
APR 8 2 MUCH FUN!  
APR 15 DEANNE CALIFORNIA AKA BUNNY  
APR 22 MELANIE LOUISE  
APR 29 FARMERS MARKET TRIO  
WEDNESDAYS NOON-2PM

**WILLITS CENTER FOR THE ARTS PRESENTS**  
ART TALKS and WINSLOW HOMER  
Friday, April 10 at 6:30  
Winslow Homer (1836-1910)  
One of the greatest painters of nineteenth-century  
71 E. Commercial St. Willits, CA. 95490  
For More Information  
www.willitscenterforthearts.com

**ASB EASTER EGG HUNT**  
APRIL 4 | 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM @ WILLITS HIGH SCHOOL  
Event Schedule  
10:00-11:00 Games  
Vendors  
Arts & Crafts  
11:00-11:30 Easter Egg Hunt Begins!  
Plus:  
Free Games & Prizes  
Face Painting  
Snacks & Food  
Admission  
4 & Under: FREE  
Ages 5 & Up: \$10  
Egg Hunt Sections  
Section 1: Ages 4 & Under  
Section 2: Ages 5 & Up (Bigger Hunt!)  
JOIN US FOR EASTER FUN!  
Bring your friends & family for a morning of fun!

**WILLITS REDWOOD LITTLE LEAGUE OPENING DAY CEREMONY**  
Saturday April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2026  
Arrival: 8:00am  
Start time: 8:30am  
Little League Fields  
Willits, CA  
Baseball games all day long after ceremony!

**WILLITS CENTER FOR THE ARTS presents**  
String Creek Artisans  
Garry Colson  
OPENING APRIL 4 \*\*\* 6-8pm  
Art, Refreshments, & Community \*\* A free event \*\*  
Hogland Barn - G. Colson Walker Road - G. Colson Owl - G. Colson  
Galleries open Fridays Saturdays & Sundays thru April 26 \* 11-5pm  
WCA \* 71 East Commercial St., Willits \* www.willitscenterforthearts.org

**BROOKTRAILS FIRE GOLF TOURNAMENT**  
\$50 PER PERSON \$200 PER TEAM (OR RIBS COMPETITION) 9:00 AM START TIME  
AND PUTTING COMPETITION & RIBS COMPETITION  
MAY 16  
REGISTER NOW!  
CONTACT JERAMY: (707) 367-8565  
RIBS COMPETITION: CONTACT JEFF (707) 367-2219  
HOLE SPONSORSHIPS: CONTACT JERAMY (707) 367-8565  
ALL PRIZES BENEFIT BROOKTRAILS & FIRE DEPARTMENT

**SAVE THE DATE**  
FRIDAY, JUNE 19TH  
WILLITS FRONTIER DAYS HOMETOWN CELEBRATION!  
WE'RE KICKING OFF THE 100<sup>TH</sup> YEAR ANNIVERSARY WITH A PARTY ON MAIN STREET  
VENDOR APPLICATIONS WILL BE AVAILABLE BY 4/15. TO SECURE YOUR SPOT, PLEASE SEND AN EMAIL TO: WFD.HOMETOWNCELEBRATION@GMAIL.COM

**Willits Community Theatre Presents ANIKA SNYDER**  
and Student poets from Willits High School  
Saturday April 11 at 7 p.m.  
Willits Community Theatre • 37 W. Van Lane  
Open Reading to follow  
Donation Requested, but no one turned away due to lack of funds

**Adult Prom 1990's**  
APRIL 18<sup>TH</sup>, 2026 7:00 P.M.  
OUR SPONSORS:  
UNVEILED ANDELA BARR CHRISTIAN WILLITS POWER EQUIPMENT RENTALS  
BACK TO THE 90S  
Join us for a night of nostalgia, dancing, and celebration at the Community Center in Willits. A portion of proceeds will fund a scholarship for a local high school senior.  
https://willitswomeninbusiness.com/

**AMERICAN INDIAN MOVEMENT'S 500 MILE SPIRIT RUNNERS' PRAYER RUN APRIL 12<sup>TH</sup>**  
10AM-3PM CAMP ONE JACKSON STATE FOREST  
Join this gathering to support local Tribes' efforts to preserve and protect the forest  
MORE DETAILS AT SAVEJACKSON.ORG



## Kathy Rippey

We're still grieving the passing of our dear friend Kathleen A. Rippey. She died unexpectedly of heart failure on Thanksgiving morning, November 27, 2025 at a hospital in Santa Rosa. She was born August 6, 1949.

Music played an integral part throughout Kathy's whole life, starting in her father's record store in Milwaukee while growing up. Though she spent years working as a paralegal, grant writer, and other roles, she always kept a hand in the music world.

When she realized her dream of moving to New Orleans, she proudly worked for Offbeat Magazine, the city's preeminent source of New Orleans' music culture and business. After being blown out of the city by Hurricane Katrina, she found a new home first near, and later in Willits.

At some point she got involved with



KZYX and was hosting her own New Orleans music program "Get On Up" and later became a board member. Music is my religion, she used to say.

An avid reader and fierce advocate for fairness and justice, Kathy stayed engaged with community and political issues until she died.

She loved going to live concerts with friends, watching a good movie, playing a game of Mexican Train, and going swimming or soaking at Orr Hot Springs. She enjoyed laughing, sharing good food, and conversing with friends at a party.

Kathy, we miss you!

A celebration of life will be held on Sunday, April 12, 11 am to 2 pm at the Grange in Willits.

It's a potluck. A dish or dessert to share will be appreciated. Various drinks are provided, including coffee and tea. The celebration will feature music from Kathy's radio show "Get On Up."

## Furry Friends Hoping for a Home

### Intelligent Riley

Riley is a sweet girl that is looking for an adult-only home that will give her love, stability, a safe space, and training. She has been in and out of shelters for many years, through no fault of her own, and needs a chance to decompress, acclimate, and to be given the chance to be a part of a loving family.

She is highly treat-motivated, athletic, and whip-smart. Shy at first, Riley bonds quickly to her humans. She is very playful, has loads of energy, but also knows how to cuddle up at the end of the day. As with many shelter dogs, Riley is an excellent candidate for consistent training and a family that can help her reach her potential.

To learn more about Riley, or to view other adoptable animals, visit [www.milofoundation.org](http://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.

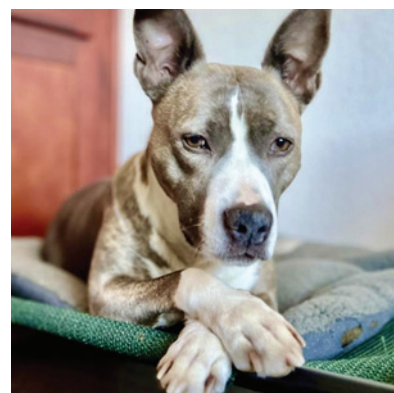
### Amusing Mrs. Doubtfire

Filled with an enthusiasm for life, Mrs. Doubtfire is always ready to meet new people and make great impressions. She is a fun little cat who enjoys feline company and spring toys.

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.mendocinohumanesociety.com](http://www.mendocinohumanesociety.com), on our Facebook page, and on [www.petfinder.com](http://www.petfinder.com). Call 707-485-0123 for more information.

### Faithful Jack

Jack was found in Hopland with another dog trying to survive in a ravine next to a vineyard. Once they were found, it was evident that Jack had an old injury most likely caused from being hit by a car. The dogs had been out for months and when finally arrived at the shelter



they were emaciated. Jack was sent to the vet and x-rays showed he had a fractured hip and needed surgery. Unfortunately, because he was so emaciated he needed to gain weight and build some muscle, so he landed in a foster home. Jack had surgery and is now in recovery.

He was quite shy when arriving at the shelter but has gained confidence and is learning that new people equals treats and pets. Jack loves to be petted, is potty-trained and goes to the door when he needs to go out and learned this in two days. He is also crate-trained but will let you know when he feels he has been in the crate too long or needs to go out. He sleeps in his crate all night. He has been left alone in the house and has not been destructive and been a very good boy. Jack loves hanging out on his dog bed in the evening with his people and will demand attention when he needs pets. He takes treats gently and it only takes a minute to warm up to new people and then they will become his best friend, just don't rush new meetings.



He LOVES toys and will entertain himself. He has been great with other dogs while in his crate but hasn't met new dogs due to his injury. If he has a treat, he may give a quiet growl, letting

intruders know the treat is his and they are too close for his comfort and he isn't into sharing. Jack will not be a running partner, due to his injury but does well on a leash for gentle walks. Although he doesn't like getting into cars, he is very good for the ride. Jack has won over the heart of everyone he meets. He is a sweet, goofy guy and the staff at the vet hospital where he had surgery fell in love with him. Jack will keep you laughing and will be a very loyal dog.

The Mendocino County Animal Shelter, located at 298 Plant Road in Ukiah, is open to the public from 9:30 am to 5 pm Tuesday through Friday, and 10 am to 3 pm on Saturdays (closed for lunch each day from 1 to 1:30 pm). Make sure to pre-fill out the adoption application available at [www.mendocinanimalshelter.com](http://www.mendocinanimalshelter.com). Call 707-463-4427 for more information.



## Record 30,000 endangered Coho salmon return to Mendocino Coast rivers

Submitted by NOAA Fisheries

Back-to-back record spawning seasons suggest that reconnecting tributaries and restoring salmon habitat is supporting population growth in Mendocino County for one of the most endangered coho salmon, the Central California Coast Coho. NOAA has funded more than 100 restoration projects on the Mendocino Coast.

During the 2024–2025 spawning season, endangered Central California Coast coho salmon migrated to Mendocino Coast rivers in numbers few scientists thought they would see in their careers. Monitoring teams estimated that more than 30,000 adult coho returned, double the previous season's record-breaking return of 15,000 coho. These numbers represent a significant leap from the past decade, where as few as 3,000 fish returned annually.

Several factors contributed to this surge. Many scientists believe that reconnecting spawning streams to mainstem rivers and other large-scale habitat restoration projects significantly boosted their productivity and abundance. These actions expanded and improved the habitat available for salmon to spawn and grow. Since 2000, NOAA has supported more than 100 restoration projects across the region.

For biologists and restoration practitioners who have spent decades surveying streams with few or no fish, the new numbers feel profound.

"I am overjoyed—everybody's just ecstatic about how many coho there are," said NOAA Marine Habitat Resource Specialist Joe Pecharich, who has been supporting restoration projects in the region for 20 years. "We have conducted intensive sampling since 2009 in these watersheds, and many of us never thought we'd see something like this in our lifetime."

Central California Coast coho salmon are the most endangered subset of the coho salmon species. The rivers of the Mendocino Coast are part of their range between Santa Cruz in the south and Punta Gorda in Northern California. While other areas have seen increases in CCC coho salmon, the Mendocino Coast returns are the most dramatic.

To estimate the number of returns on the Mendocino Coast, monitoring teams conduct surveys across roughly 500 miles of habitat. The teams are led by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, with funding from NOAA Fisheries. Staff from the Pacific Marine Fisheries Commission, Mendocino Redwood Company, and Redwood Timber Company participate in the effort.

Teams visit randomly selected stream sections, known as "reaches," every two weeks during spawning season. They count adult fish and redds—gravel nests built by spawning females. At life-cycle monitoring stations crews track juvenile fish traveling downstream and adult fish traveling upstream. They use this information and other data to estimate watershed-wide populations.

Members of the monitoring teams reported that counting fish during the 2024–2025 migration was exhausting but exhilarating.

David Ulrich, a senior scientist at Mendocino Redwood Company, said that in previous years, his team typically surveyed two stream reaches per day on the North Fork Navarro River. Last year, they barely covered half a reach on some days.

"In the past, we'd have days where we wouldn't see any fish," Ulrich said. "Last year we were seeing 50 to 100 fish a day during

the height of the spawning season."

Other team members nearly tripped over salmon while crossing streams.

Scientists believe decades of habitat restoration are beginning to pay off.

"In combination with improved fisheries management, the Mendocino Coast shows the value of restoration and watershed health," Joshua Fuller, NOAA's Coastal California Branch supervisor, said. "When good ocean conditions and good hydrology align, restored habitat allows fish to take full advantage of those conditions."

Over the past two decades, NOAA Fisheries' Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund and the Office of Habitat Conservation have invested heavily in rebuilding habitat across Mendocino Coast watersheds.

By replacing barriers to fish passage—such as undersized road culverts—with fish-friendly designs, restoration partners have reopened access to spawning and rearing habitat.

"We don't want to write off an area just because we haven't seen coho there," Gallagher said. "When we increase connectivity in the upper and lower reaches, salmon move in and use that space."

NOAA's Office of Habitat Conservation currently funds Trout Unlimited to remove barriers in the Navarro, Big, Garcia, and Noyo River watersheds.

Coho salmon have a 3-year life cycle, spending about 18 months in freshwater and 18 months in the ocean. The adults that returned in winter 2024–2025 were born to parents that spawned in the winter of 2021–2022.

Many complex factors impact salmon numbers, and pinpointing the exact causes is extremely difficult. However, according to NOAA Fisheries scientist Nate Mantua, several conditions aligned. When the parents of the 2024–2025 spawners migrated upstream in 2021, fall rains provided enough water for them to access to tributaries higher up in the watershed. When juveniles migrated to sea in 2023, stream flows were also favorable.

Marine survival appears to have improved as well.

"From our life cycle monitoring station on Pudding Creek, we found that marine survival was around 8 percent last year," said Gallagher. "Usually, we're hovering around 2 percent or lower. That suggests more favorable ocean conditions."

Scientists also point to conservative ocean management measures and changes to California forest practice rules that reduce logging impacts in salmon habitat.

Recovering CCC coho will require sustained effort in both freshwater and ocean ecosystems. The species remains endangered, and increasingly erratic cycles of drought and intense winter storms continue to pose risks.

Monitoring for the 2025–2026 season will continue through May, but early observations suggest another strong year despite frequent storms.

"We've seen somewhere around 400 coho on the North Fork Navarro so far," Ulrich said in mid-February. "That's way up past our normal estimates."

Two consecutive record seasons do not guarantee recovery. But they signal that long-term investments in restoration, monitoring, and management are reshaping the future of this endangered species.

The rest of Kitchen | From page 2

clients receiving not only nourishment, but also kindness, dignity, and connection.

Over the years, Caring Kitchen became a meaningful part of many lives in Mendocino County. We are deeply grateful to Tarney, April, the many volunteers, staff, partners, and supporters who shaped this work and helped it grow.

As we move through this transition, we want to recognize the heart that built Caring Kitchen and the lasting difference it has made in our community.

Do you have a story or special memory of Caring Kitchen that you would like to share? Please send your thoughts and memories to [communications@noinc.org](mailto:communications@noinc.org)

The rest of Brooktrails | From page 1

Alaniz also noted that the second round of abatement letters, 1,400 total, have been mailed to residents in order to get abatement on the properties.

She also announced that the Brooktrails business office has relocated across the street from its former location.

The Brooktrails Fire Department has scheduled a Golf Tournament on May 16 that also includes a Ribs and Putting Competition, starting at 9 am. Cost is \$200 per team for the Ribs Competition. See event poster in this week's Willits Weekly Calendar for more information on how to register.

Candidate for Third District supervisor Buffy Wright Bourassa spoke to the group and emphasized that communication, emergency preparedness, and coordination are critical and among her top priorities.

Eric Hart, candidate for Third District supervisor, also spoke and announced a "Get Acquainted with the Candidate" event on April 8 at Flying Dog

Pizza, at 5:30 pm.

Following Bourassa, Third District Supervisor John Haschak provided an update on the development of the access route. He noted that there has been a lot of communication between CAL FIRE and the City of Willits regarding the Firco route. Because a small segment of the Firco route was blocked, the route was changed in order to go around it and up to the airport as the City of Willits owns and runs the airport.

On April 8., a memorandum of understanding between the City of Willits and CAL FIRE will be presented to their board for approval. Haschak noted funding would come from the county assessment that people here are paying for the access route.

Finally, the board focused on the Consent Calendar, voting unanimous approval of the Accounts Payable Report for Authorization to Issue Checks and Electronic Payments on or about March 25, 2026 in the amount of \$192,117.06.

## Get ready for the 100th annual celebration of Willits Frontier Days in June and July 2026

See the tentative schedule below, and find more details online at [www.WillitsFrontierDays.com](http://www.WillitsFrontierDays.com)

### Willits Frontier Days – 2026 Events - Tentative

Date	Time	Event	Location	Admission
Fri, June 19	5:00 pm	Hometown Celebration	Main Street Willits	Free
Sat, June 20	6:00 pm	Ned Ledoux Concert	Jack Tharp Arena	\$40.00
Fri, June 26	6:00 pm	Truck Pulls	Jack Tharp Arena	\$25 - Adults \$15 - Child (12 and under) Free - Child (2 and under)
	9:00 pm	Street Dance Featuring Brody Stewart Band	Tennis Courts	Free
Sat, June 27	5:00pm	Carnival Opens Western Art show Show closes on July 5th	Old Ball Field Community Center	Free
Sun, June 28	6:00 pm	Sweetheart Dinner	Rodeo Grounds	\$25 - Adult (limited tickets)
Friday, July 3	7:00 pm	CCPRA Rodeo Rockin' M Rodeo	Jack Tharp Arena	\$30 - Box Seats \$25 - Adult \$15 - Child (12 and under) Free - Child (2 and under)
	9:00 pm	Western Dance Chad Bushnell	Tennis Courts	Free
Sat, July 4	10:00 am	Horseshoe Competition	Rec Grove	\$75 Entry Fee Free to watch
	11:00 am	Main Street Parade "Year of the Sweethearts"	North Main Street	Free
	12:00 pm	Country Music Rodeola	Recreation Grove	Free
		Western BBQ	Recreation Grove	\$25 - Adult \$15 - Child (3 & up)
	4:00 pm	Water fights	Fire House	FREE
	7:00 pm	CCPRA Rodeo Rockin' M Rodeo	Jack Tharp Arena	\$30 - Box Seats \$25 - Adult \$15 - Child (12 and under) Free - Child (2 and under)
Sun, July 5	7:00 am	Lions Club Cowboy Breakfast	Recreation Grove	\$15 - Adults \$10 - Child (12 and under)
	8:00 am	Jr. Rodeo (Junior Rodeo ticket price includes entry to Bulls and Broncs)	Jack Tharp Arena	\$20 - Adult \$10 - Child (12 and under)
	6:00 pm	Bulls and Broncs	Jack Tharp Arena	
Sun, July 26	8:00 am	Horseshow	Jack Tharp Arena	FREE

Information subject to change

NED LEDOUX

SAVE  
SATURDAY, JUNE 20, 2026  
**THE DATE**

FACEBOOK & INSTAGRAM  
[WWW.WILLITSFRONTIERDAYS.COM](http://WWW.WILLITSFRONTIERDAYS.COM)

NOYO

Theater Willits, CA.

57 East Commercial Street - Willits  
707-459-6660  
[www.noyotheater.com](http://www.noyotheater.com)

Mid week promotions: Wednesday - Matinee prices to all shows all day.

MARIO BROS GALAXY MOVIE

(PG) 1H 38min

Fri:  
2:45, 5:00, 7:15

Sat/Sun:  
2:45, 5:00, 7:15

Wed/Thurs:  
2:45, 5:00, 7:15

Showtimes: April 3 to April 9

THEATER 1 DELUXE LUXURY RECLINERS, LASER PROJECTION

PROJECT HAIL MARY

(PG) 1H 29min

Fri:  
3:15, 6:30

Sat/Sun:  
3:15, 6:30

Wed/Thurs:  
3:15, 6:30

Closed Monday/Tuesday

EPIC, ELVIS PRESLEY IN CONCERT

(R) 2H 6 min

Fri:  
3:00, 5:15, 7:30

Sat/Sun:  
3:00, 5:15, 7:30

Wed/Thurs:  
3:00, 5:15, 7:30

Thrifty Thursday: \$8.00 tickets. Thrifty Thursday films this week in red.

We now have  
**Open Caption Wednesdays**

This means that, when available, every show on Wednesdays will have subtitles on the screen.



Hannah, Gracie and Madison Bouthillier, new owners of Moon Lady.

## MD Tree puts up new American flag atop the Willits Arch

Mike Quinliven of MD Tree Management hung a new American flag on top of the Willits Arch for the City of Willits last week, "after working hard all week to help make the Recreation Grove safe for the upcoming event season," said Kenan O'Shea, Streets and Parks superintendent for the City of Willits.

Delores Potter posted photos on Facebook of the MD Tree crew getting the new flag up on Thursday, March 26: "Thank you MD Tree Management!" she posted. Many online commenters chimed in with "Thank you" posts, too.

"It was an honor to hang the flag for the city in my hometown as well as working in the park," Quinliven replied to the post.



MD Tree's Mike Quinliven reaches to attach the new U.S. flag at the top of the Willits Arch.

Below: The MD Tree Management crew works to hang a new American flag for the Willits Arch on Main Street.

Photos courtesy Delores Potter



## Moon Lady celebrates 34 years of business on May 1, and new owners on April 1

Submitted by Jamie Bouthillier

On May 1, Moon Lady will celebrate 34 years of business. Along with this celebration we are excited to announce a new chapter: As of April 1, 2026, Hannah, Gracie, and Madison Bouthillier are the new owners of Moon Lady - Moon Man Maverick Boutique.

They are thrilled to be part of the legacy and will continue with the same standard of excellence in customer service, consistent hours of operation, and fine product availability. All the footwear, clothing lines, and accessories will remain: Birkenstock, UGG, Blundstone, Teva, Free People, Z Supply, Bila, Premium Levi, LA Made, Hammitt Leather Hand Bags, along with jewelry lines: Tiger Mountain,

Kismet, and Chan Luu, just to name a few.

Marie Blancas, founding owner, will remain on staff and will guide, share and teach the Bouthillier ladies all of her five decades of knowledge, contacts, and vision. Moon Lady - Moon Man will continue to flourish with hard work and dedication, along with the support of our loyal customers, as part of the Willits business community.

Celebrate with Hannah, Gracie, and Madison in this new exciting chapter for them and Willits!

April 1, 2 and 3, all shoppers spending \$100 or more will be entered into a drawing - three \$100 gift certificate winners will be drawn on April 6.

## The rest of No Kings

From page 5

organization's efforts to provide legal counseling and funds to undocumented immigrants. Kirk Lumpkin recited a poem dedicated to Renee Good and Alex Pretti, who were shot by ICE agents on the streets of Minneapolis. Larry Aguilera, a Pomo elder, gave an invocation concerning land acknowledgement, saying, "First, I'd like to thank the creator for allowing us to be here, to walk on Mother Earth and I'd also like to say that you are the beautiful people because you came out and you care."

One of the highlights on the stage was a very pointed presentation by Kim Bancroft and Mary Burns. Bancroft read the Declaration of Independence and found 27 grievances the colonists stated about King George. Bancroft quoted 20 of these directly from the Declaration and Burns updated each and related them to the current political situation.

Charlie Vaughan chanted, "We want to take

back the word woke. It is not a dirty word. It means an awful lot. The opposite is: are you going to go to sleep? Are you going to ignore things? Are you going to be willfully ignorant? We're going to be woke and we're going to be proud of it."

Although the participants had a multitude of grievances toward the current administration, the demonstration was peaceful, orderly, and infused with love for their fellow citizens. There were signs expressing the frustration and dislike of what is occurring in the current political climate, however, the overall atmosphere was one of love and concern for the people of the country and the world.

"Don't screw with the people of this country," said Burns. "We love our country. There's a lot to protect. It was founded on an idea, and the idea is everything."

## The rest of Trail

From page 1

Tribal and local government leaders, neighbors and outdoor enthusiasts to build a trail that will help advance generational change in the North Coast, spur economic development, create jobs, and provide the public unparalleled access to some of the most stunning landscapes in the world."

When completed, the 300-plus miles of the Great Redwood Trail will be one of the longest rail-to-trail conversion projects in the United States, winding through five Northern

California counties; from the San Francisco Bay through wine country, farm lands, mountains, Redwood forests, across rivers, to the Humboldt Bay and beyond. This

newly-approved Master Plan covers 231 miles to be developed by the Great Redwood Trail Agency, traversing the northernmost three counties: Mendocino, Trinity, and Humboldt.

"We're transforming abandoned rail and ecological damage into restoration and beautiful trails. The Great Redwood Trail will create lasting memories for thousands of locals and visitors," shared Mary Sackett, Chair of The Great Redwood Trail Agency and Marin County Supervisor.

While locals and visitors alike benefit from hiking, biking, horseback riding, kayaking, wildlife watching, rural town tourism, and even commuting, at its core the

GRT is an ecological restoration project. Transforming the neglected properties once owned by the now-defunct Northwestern Pacific Railroad will involve removing hazardous materials and equipment, shoring up damaged slopes, restoring and protecting wildlife corridors and habitats for riparian species like the steelhead and salmon, restoring local native plants, and much more.

"The Coastal Conservancy is proud to have supported the Great Redwood Trail Agency since its inception with staff time, expertise, and funding," said Amy Hutzler, Executive Officer of the State Coastal Conservancy. "The Great Redwood Trail will be a landmark trail for the State of California, opening public access to some of Northern California's most extraordinary landscapes in ways that protect and restore their ecological values."

The GRT is also a major infrastructure project with impressive economic benefits. Most of the tens of millions of dollars invested through state awards will go directly to the local partners, staff, contractors, and vendors whose work will make the GRT possible. Once completed, the Mendocino-Trinity-Humboldt stretch of the Great Redwood



Trail alone is forecasted to create more than \$102.5 million in local economic benefit per year (in 2023 dollars.) That's nearly \$170,000 a day in daily business revenue connected to the GRT.

To read the full master plan, visit: <https://thegreatredwoodtrail.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Great-Redwood-Trail-Master-Plan-with-Appendices.pdf>

The Great Redwood Trail is a 300+ mile, world-class, multi-use rail-to-trail project connecting California's San Francisco and Humboldt Bays. The legacy trail will travel through some of the most remote and scenic landscapes in the United States, traversing old growth redwood forests, running alongside oak woodlands and vineyards, and winding through the magnificent Eel River Canyon.



## The rest of Chili

From page 3

Captain Harry So. "He had us taste it at one of our meetings. He did really well, an excellent chili. Harry's here in spirit," she said, saying that Harry could not attend the cook-off because he was doing EMT duties at a bicycle race.

WindsorONE, from Windsor Mills, who ended up winning the Judges' Choice trophy, was fronted by Christy Wisdom, who said: "I'm bribing for People's Choice tickets. I've got beanies, footballs, and chili pepper necklaces. We won the People's Choice Award back in 2015. I have a lot of competition today. I love it. Are you judging? I was going to start bribing you."

Indeed, good-hearted bribery was part of the allure of the evening. All the judges, Saprina Rodriguez, Matthew Alaniz, and Gerry Gonzalez were looking for bribes to turn back to the Senior Center, as part of the fun of the evening.

Other competitors included the Willits Lions Club, Tanya Simms with her "Cowboy Kickin' Chili," and The Culinary School at California Conservation Corps.

"This is a benefit for the Senior Center," explained Executive Director Richard Baker. "All the money that we raise will be used to buy food for the Meals on Wheels program. We average between 35 to 50 meals a day. It depends on what the meal is. We could use a Meals on Wheels volunteer driver one day a week to deliver in Brooktrails. It would probably only take an hour of their time, only two to five meals."

Gonzalez, a veteran judge, survives by taking antacid before and after the competition, a trick he passed on to Rodriguez. Gonzalez stated, "What I like is the comradery of the community, coming together to support the Senior Center and share good food with each other. And everybody has good stories to share."



Above: The Senior Center Chili Cookoff is well attended. At right: Amaya looks forward to sitting down at the communal table to begin tasting her array of chilis. Below: Councilmember Gerry Gonzalez, one of the judges of the evening, displays his graveyard of tasted chilis from his efforts to try all the tables at least once.



From far left: Susan Mahoney, of the Willits Lions Club, has a conversation with Third District Supervisor John Haschak. Several tables are decorated with chilies to attract the judges and attendees. Willits Senior Center Executive Director Richard Baker offers root beer floats available for purchase.

Photos by Mathew Caine

Free Afterschool Care

Hands on Learning

Art

Large Yard

**WILLITS ELEMENTARY CHARTER SCHOOL**  
 FALL 2026  
 KINDERGARTEN ENROLLMENT IS OPEN!  
 NEW Half or Full Day Options  
 (707) 459-1400  
WECS IS A K-5 SCHOOL WITH A FOCUS ON ACADEMICS, ART, MUSIC, SPANISH, AND COMMUNITY

# Meet MIKE McGUIRE!

Candidate for the NEW 1st Congressional District

## TOWN HALL

SAT, APR. 18

Coffee and baked goods at 9:30 a.m.  
 Town Hall gathering starts at 10 a.m.  
 NOYO THEATER, WILLITS



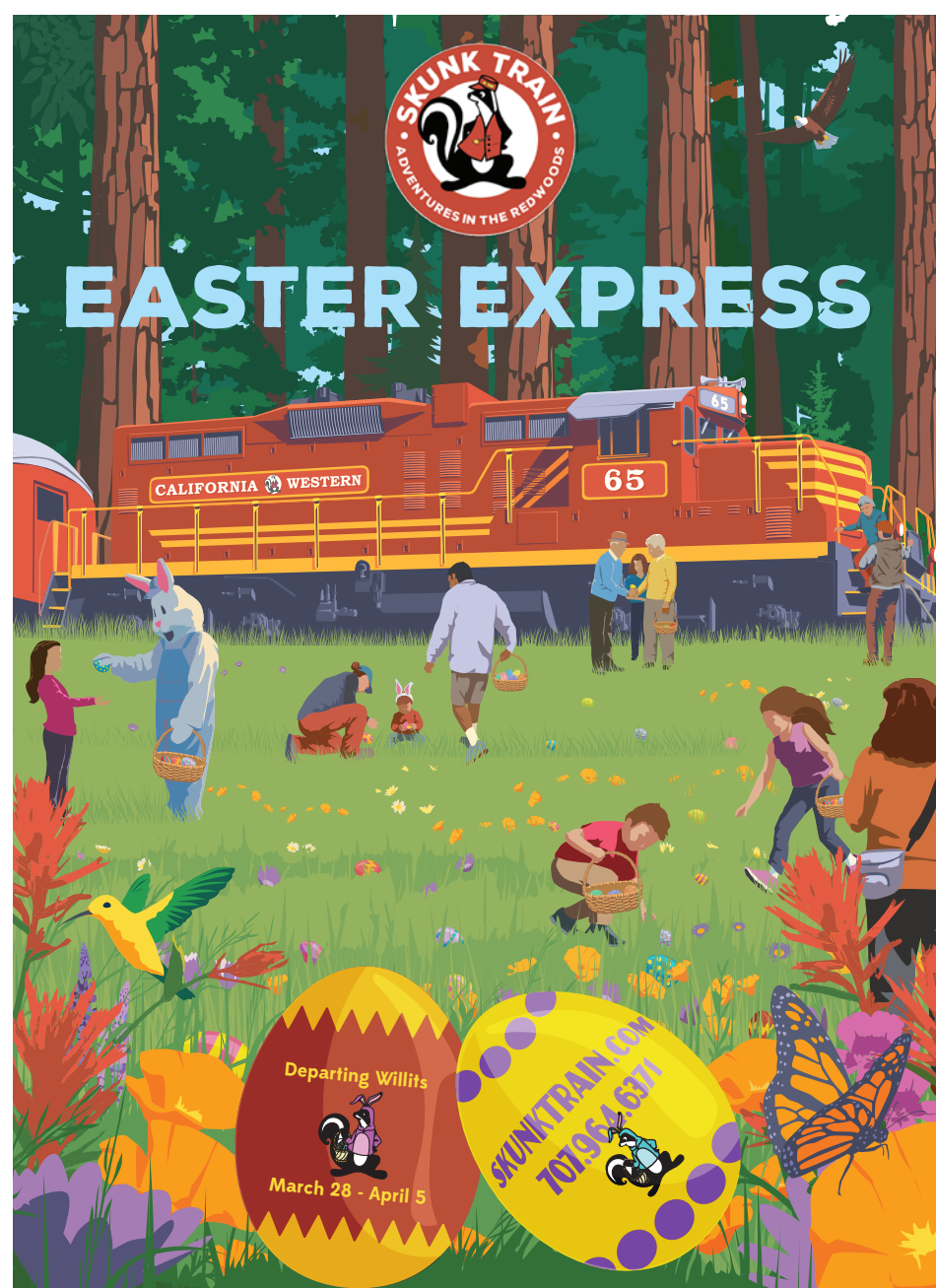
### Mike will work to:

- RAISE the minimum wage
- ESTABLISH Medicare for all
- PROTECT rural hospitals
- LOWER the cost of living
- REIN IN the Executive Branch and ICE

He will also join the Progressive Caucus in the House to restore:

- ♦ fair elections
- ♦ financial assistance programs
- ♦ environmental protections
- ♦ civil liberties and more.

Paid for by Mendocino County Democratic Party  
 FEC# C00404145 FPPC # 82268 P.O. Box 28, Ukiah, CA 95482



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