

the sheet

News, Views & Culture of the Eastern Sierra



Steve Earle played Bluesapalooza Sunday, the final concert @ Sam's Woodsite. For more, see Lunch's column page 15.

Saturday, August 9, 2025

FREE

Vol. 23, No. McHale



Construction crews strip the siding from the Aspen Village Apartments

JUST LIKE ASPEN

By Fisher

There's an old saying that goes "buy it nice or buy it twice." When it comes to the Aspen Village Apartments, it seems the developers chose the latter.

The complex was one of the first affordable housing projects brought to life nearly 20 years ago by the since renamed non-profit Mammoth Lakes Housing (now Eastern Sierra Community Housing). It was developed and is now owned by Pacific Companies; the same developers that are currently working on the Parcel, the Town of Mammoth Lakes' most ambitious (and expensive) current housing project.

The complex — formerly painted green, red, and beige — sits on Old Mammoth Road, next to Snowcreek Athletic Club. This week, its siding was stripped off as part of a major renovation, revealing water damage and rot beneath.

Jeff Boucher, a contractor in Mammoth, said the need for repair suggests serious neglect or flawed construction.

"Usually, you don't have to replace your siding unless it's gone 15-20 years without any stain or paint," he said. "Something major is wrong."

He was around when the buildings went up in 2006, and said the way it was built was "really strange," and that it seemed

like the priority was getting the units built fast, regardless of quality.

"They just threw up the cheapest thing they could to make housing," he said.

True to his point, Aspen Village *was* built using a method that was unusual for Mammoth at the time.

The Aspen Village condos are modular homes, meaning they were built in a factory in Idaho, transported to the site and craned onto the foundation. Most of the siding was applied in the factory, with only the connection points finished on-site, said Pam Foster, former Executive Director of Mammoth Lakes Housing. She was the organization's Development Director when the complex went up.

"It was the first of its kind here," she said.

Foster's best guess as to why siding failed is because it originally wasn't slated to hold up against the amount of snow and wind the property gets. Or, she said, it might have been a "bad batch" of material.

Either way, she doesn't think it's a big deal, as it's Pacific's responsibility to fix, not the public's. And she's right ... at least since no Town dollars are going into the renovation, confirmed Nolan Bobroff, Mammoth Lakes

more ASPEN, pg. 5

TAG, YOU'RE OUT!

City red-tags Chamber building. A-Frame still usable as visitor center

Press Release

The Bishop City Council announced at its last meeting that an inspection had taken place of the City-owned visitor center/Chamber of Commerce building at the corner of the Bishop City Park. The report of that inspection was released Wednesday.

The City of Bishop tasked David Lackyard, Senior Building Inspector at Willdan Engineering, with inspecting the building.

According to Lackyard, the southern expansion area (a later addition constructed over the stream) is unsafe for occupancy and must be immediately evacuated.

The inspection report states, "approximately 60% of the cantilevered portion of the foundation has been undermined by the stream's erosion" and "the watercourse now directly abuts the concrete masonry unit foundational wall, putting the structure at imminent risk of collapse."

This portion of the building will be immediately red-tagged.

There was some good news in the inspector's report, namely that the A-Frame (north) portion of the building has not been affected by erosion, and no structural deficiencies were observed.

Bishop Mayor Karen Kong and City Administrator Deston Dishion met with Chamber Director Tawni Thomson and two of her Board Members to discuss options Thursday morning.

It was mutually agreed that Thomson and her staff would vacate the red tagged portion of the building, while the A-Frame portion will continue to operate as the Visitors Center.

Thomson and her administrative staff will work from home in the interim.

Willdan and the City Attorney will be drafting a 'Limited Access Agreement' between the City and the Chamber to allow use of the A-Frame until further notice.

In addition, the Chamber is in negotiation to purchase another building at Main and

Short Streets.

The City reached out to Wood Rodgers Inc, a private engineering firm, to assess repairs needed and determine whether the A-Frame can be left standing. The assessment will also include an estimate of costs associated with the work.

ROMEO AND JULIET



Jack Orozco (Romeo) and Brooke Miller (Juliet) in the balcony scene on opening night of the Mammoth Shakespeare Festival. Review appears pages 8-9.

On the Road

p. 13/

Holy Maccereel

p. 6/

Dumpster Fire

p. 4/

Math skills

p. 2/

Hot Fudge

p. 14/

MATH SKILLS

During Police Chief Nate Derr’s staff report at the July 28 Bishop City Council meeting, Derr noted that juvenile felony cases were on the rise. This was either a state or national stat.

After about a 50% drop in such cases between 2010-2021, case numbers had soared 76% since 2021.

So Derr proclaimed that overall, cases had increased 25% since 2010. Wrong.

Say you had 100 cases in 2010. A 50% drop would leave you at 50 cases in 2021. A 76% increase from there would put you at 88 cases.

Still a 12% drop from 2010.

Derr apologized, saying math was not his strong suit, and certainly I am more interested in his law enforcement and leadership skills than I am in his math skills. And I appreciate that he is more focused on the practical part of his job than the numbers.

Yet, numbers matter.

Which leads us to the Inyo County budget workshop on Wednesday.

And what was striking about this workshop was the brazenness of it. Of staff. And the meek compliance of Inyo’s putative “Supervisors.”

A county budget presentation is akin to a Rorschach test – as staff tells the Board members what they’re looking at, and the Board members nod in recognition, pretending to see.

Right off the bat, County CAO (Chief Administrative Officer) Nate Greenberg announced proudly that his “budget team” (i.e the bureaucracy) is growing every year. He announced he added yet another staffer to the team. And we “won’t balance the budget on the backs of our employees,” he said.

This before that uncomfortable part where staff acknowledges that the county has an unfunded retiree health obligation of \$79 million.

Of course, that’s a can that can get kicked endlessly down the road. Let’s not talk about that.

Instead let’s talk about fee hikes (raising taxes) and revenue enhancements (raising taxes) all the while not saying the two dreaded words - raising taxes.

This after telling us that employee salaries/benefiys represent two-thirds of the county budget and that employee cost is up 8% year-over-year.

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the

sheet

News, Views & Culture of the Eastern Sierra

“I think I’m maintaining the quality, but internally I’m paying for it.”
-Gary Larson

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Greenberg mentioned floating a potential TOT (Transient Occupancy Tax) hike. A TBID (Tourism Business Improvement District) formation ... it was like he’s from Mono County or something.

Inyo’s “conservative” Supervisors listened stoically. If someone farted, it was silent.

Supervisors were then happily informed of a “new” revenue opportunity! The skinny: The county has been taxing pot since 2018, and now the cannabis fund has about \$1.5 million in it.

Staff explained the majority of the fund (which generates about \$250,000/year) comes from pot retailers and we were told these retailers are established and stable and that the revenue will be consistent moving forward.

Obviously no one’s been paying attention to the troubled cannabis industry of late. The county just collects and projects. No one actually, you know, thinks.

State pot taxes were hiked from 15% to 19% on July 1, and competition from the illegal market (due to onerous taxes) has been fierce.

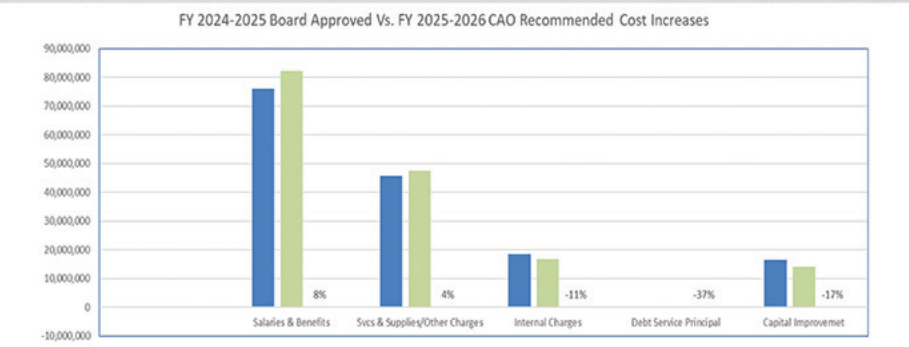
And as SFGate reported earlier this year, “California’s legal cannabis market has hit another grim milestone: There are now 10,828 inactive and surrendered pot licenses in the state and only 8,514 active ones, meaning dead pot licenses now outnumber active ones, according to the Department of Cannabis Control’s data dashboard.”

But again, let’s not talk about this. Because “this is an exciting opportunity to increase revenue,” according to staff.

10:15 a.m. Staff has been talking for 75 minutes. Greenberg asks Supervisors if there are any questions. Silence. Ten-minute break.

more LUNCH, page 15

COST INCREASES ACROSS ALL FUNDS



Projected employee cost up 8% while capital improvement expenditures are projected to decline 17%.

2025-2026 OVERVIEW

- Legislative Actions (OBBS, etc.)
- Uncertainty surrounding some Federal grant programs

CURRENT KNOWN STATE & FEDERAL IMPACTS			
Department	Description	Funding Source	Amount of Loss
Sheriff	Cooperative Law Enforcement Agreement	Forest Service	\$5,000
LTC	Old Spanish Trail Project	Rural & Tribal Pilot Program	\$750,000
HHS	Immunization COVID Funds	Immunization COVID	\$62,841
HHS	Staff cost support	CA Strengthening Public Health Initiative	Unknown
HHS	Contract services	California Equitable Recovery Initiative	Unknown
HHS	Training and Progress House Support	Mental Health Block Grant / ARPA	\$65,234
HHS	Staff cost support	Substance Use Block Grant / ARPA	\$11,865
HHS	Staff cost support	Epidemiology & Laboratory Capacity	\$1,151,351
HHS	Contract services	Community Based Child Abuse Prevention	Unknown
HHS	Supply purchasing (minimal impact)	Crisis Care Mobile Unit	TBD

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LOCAL NEWS

DUMPSTER FIRE

By Libre

On Tuesday, the Mono County Board of Supervisors unanimously voted to increase the solid waste gate fee by 15% in order to move waste out of Mono County. This followed another unanimous decision to authorize the Public Works Department to submit an application for a CalFire prevention grant to purchase an air curtain burner, also targeted at waste removal.

Paul Roten, Mono County Public Works Director, presented this information passionately. The grant application, he explained, was due the next day, and he had only found out about the air curtain burner a week and a half before. The grant would provide \$425,000, with half of the money used to purchase the equipment and half used to pay the personnel required to operate it. There would be no shared cost for this grant.

These two unanimous decisions built upon each other. Because the Benton Crossing Landfill closed in 2022, and the Pumice Valley Landfill is accruing more waste due to construction, there is limited capacity in Mono County to deal with waste. For years, Roten said, Pumice Valley has received 30 tons of forest debris per month. In June, the landfill received 800 tons of unaccounted for waste. Whoever brought the material in June used free waivers.

“We were completely overwhelmed by this incident. It was a completely incorrect use of these waivers,” Roten said. Afterword he noted there were some inferences the waivers might have been copied and illegally distributed.

Roten declined to speak more about this particular incident.

According to the Department of Public Works, the present remaining life of the Pumice Valley Landfill is 25 to 40 years. But if the rate of hazardous fuels and forest debris continues to increase as it has, the life of the landfill could be little over 10 years.

“This cannot keep going,” Roten said.

Moreover, there are currently no landfills in Mono County that bury municipal solid waste. Instead, this waste is diverted out of the county. The 15% increase in gate fees are a means to adjust for fuel and operational expenses.

Roten assured that this seemingly drastic increase in fees is meant to target bigger, industrial trash contributors rather than single family homes. In the fee proposal document he shared with the board, he pointed to the items that will be seeing the hardest increases: Aerosols exceeding the five can limit will be raised from \$6 each to \$7, antifreeze exceeding a two-gallon limit will go from \$4 per gallon to \$5. There will be a four

tube limit on Fluorescent and Compact Fluorescent tubes, down from the previous limit of 10 and 15, respectively.

If the aforementioned grant is approved, and Mono County was able to purchase an air curtain burner, that technology could help mitigate the municipal waste problem in Mono County, and create more room in the Pumice Landfill to deal with this type of waste.

So what exactly is an air curtain burner? And how could it solve the presented problems?

The air curtain burner that Roten presented can burn three to five tons of green waste, hazardous fuels, and wood debris per hour. It utilizes an electric or diesel-powered fan at the top of the box to create an “air curtain,” which then forces down smoke and sparks within the box, continuing until there are only gas emissions left. The ash that is left from this process could be used to cover the landfill or as fertilizer on local farms. Roten stated that the air curtain burner is more energy efficient than the current wood-chipping, open pile burning solution. Notably, the burner requires two trained individuals to operate. These jobs would not be full-time.

Roten further asked the board to allow him and Public Works Department to go forward on similar grants in the future.

“I don’t want to be coming to you on the day before a grant is due again asking permission to go for it while rushing to get the grant complete. I’d rather be sitting at my desk working on the thing.”

This prompted a divided discussion.

Chair Lyndia Salcido argued for a policy change in how the board approves grant applications.

“We are losing money as we sit,” she said. “Its taking too long, and we need to move this up.”

Supervisor Rhonda Duggan echoed Salcido’s sentiment. “I think this is a waste of your time,” she told Roten. Duggan argued for a middle ground, a solution in which the board was able to approve the grants in a more efficient manner.

“You can’t just apply for any grant and run with it,” Supervisor John Peters said.

Janet Dutcher, Mono County Finance Director, expressed her own concerns about the air curtain burner in a later interview with the Sheet. She’s familiar with the technology; she worked in Alpine County until 2016, which had an air curtain burner. Dutcher said there wasn’t enough time to clearly evaluate implementing the machine with the looming grant deadline.

“I think it may be a good option, but I fear we’re under too much pressure,” she said. She also wondered who would insure the burner and stated that operating the machine could be dangerous.

“It’s a piece of equipment that requires a high level of safety consciousness.”

For now, Mono County Public Works Department waits to hear back from the CalFire grant and the landfill continues to fill.



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THU, JUL 31 ST	6PM-9PM		THE TRESPASSERS
THU, AUG 14 TH	6PM-9PM		BICICLETAS POR LA PAZ
THU, SEP 4 TH	6PM-9PM		THE FELT CUTOUTS

ASPEN
continued from page 1

Community Development Director.

When Eastern Sierra Community Housing contracted Pacific to build the project, the developers signed into an ongoing obligation to maintain and repair those units. Part of the tenants' rent goes into a Town-managed, state-mandated "capital reserve" fund. That fund is typically used for smaller expenses, like replacing carpet between leases, but it can also be applied to major renovations if the Town chooses to approve it.

That request usually comes after repairs are already complete.

"We review [the request] to make sure that it complies with what reserves can be used for and say, 'yes' or 'no,'" Bobroff said. "And that's just whether they can remove those funds from the reserve account to reimburse them."

If the reserve doesn't cover the cost, or if the Town denies the request, it's up to Pacific to fund the difference.

In this case, Pacific previously applied for tax credit financing that is specifically for rehab to bridge the gap, but wasn't successful, and is applying for those funds again in September.

If Pacific fails to keep the building up to

snuff or cannot finance the renovations, the Town can put it in default. To ensure compliance, the Town hires a third party inspector to assess the complex on an annual basis.

Put simply, Pacific maintains the project, but the Town regulates it.

"That's part of the beauty of these projects," Foster said. "It's not like somebody who comes in and builds a project can walk away and leave other owners or the renters responsible for the upkeep."

As for how these repairs are influencing the Town's planning for the Parcel: they're not. Bobroff blames the big winter of 2022-23 for the damage and, like Foster, sees the repairs as a sign of responsible upkeep, not a red flag.

"[Pacific] ultimately owns the asset in the long term, so they're going to want to keep it in good repair since they have a lot invested into it," Bobroff said. "That's their revenue source to recoup their investment, so if it's falling apart, that's obviously eating into their revenues to do additional repairs."

So, we'll see in another two decades whether Pacific bought it nice this time... or if they'll be buying it thrice.



Some of the damage on the building revealed once the siding was removed



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HOLY MACCEREL!

By Fisher

Shira Dubrovner knows a thing or two about playing the long game. She's the Artistic Director at Mammoth Lakes Repertory Theatre (MLRT), an organization that has performed in a half dozen venues (or more) over the past twenty years, and is accustomed to stages of all stripes, most recently using the Mammoth High School Multi-Purpose Room, But this week, she saw a sign of the future she's been dreaming of. A future first conceptualized 25 years ago, with at least a year and a half to go. Like I said ... long game. The Town of Mammoth Lakes finally broke ground on the McCoy Arts and Cultural Center (MACC) on Wednesday afternoon, a project at 100 College Parkway poised to build off of and renovate the existing Edison Theatre and add a 239-seat performing art space. "I just want it built. I want a home. I don't want to be so transient," Dubrovner said. "It's very frustrating and hard for me to wait, but I am very hopeful. I'm excited." The new "home" at the MACC means



a lot for artists like Dubrovner. A future of expanded shows, more exposure, increased profit margins, and rehearsal without hassle. But until Spring 2027, the theatre group still can't set down roots. "While it's very generous of [the high school] to let us use the space, it's not ideal because we have to set up chairs and take them down. We have to set up the blackout curtains and take them down if it's a school night. It would be nice to be able to find a more secure and user-friendly situation so that we don't have to do that every night," she said. In the interim, Rob Patterson, Mammoth Lakes Town Manager, said he's actively helping to search for a space for the group to perform and rehearse. But so far, neither the Town nor the theatre group have leads. "We're still figuring it out," Patterson said. "We've got to find something like a storefront or some kind of retail space. There's usually some of those spaces available." Having no set place to perform has impaired the group's exposure. Dubrovner, also the Director of the Mammoth Lakes Film Festival, said it's common for even people within the local workforce to be unaware of performing arts events. "I don't know what else I can do to make sure that everybody knows about the film festival," she said. "We are trying to figure out a way to work with the town and MMSA so the visitors know about the performing arts activities." Once the MACC is completed, Du-

brovner, among others, hopes to ramp up the arts scene in Mammoth and offer a mix of artists traveling up from Los Angeles as well as local talent. For example, she might be able to invite someone like Jason Alexander, the former Seinfeld star, to perform his one-man show for the Mammoth crowd. She's connected to him via her publicist, but is holding her horses because she doesn't have a place to host him. "I can't invite him to come and do his one man show in a storefront somewhere in Mammoth that has 50 seats in it. He's going to want a professional space," she said. The MACC, once completed, will also provide a home base for the Chamber Music Festival, the Eastern Sierra Community Chorus, the Sierra Classic Theatre, and other groups yet to form. To quote Mayor Chris Bubser at the groundbreaking, "What about dance? I know we've got dance groups!" So why did it take 25 years to put a shovel to the project? Well, the idea for the MACC came alongside the passage of the Measure C bond in 2000, which permitted funding allocation for performing arts facilities. Through that bond, the Kern Community College District (KCCD) committed \$7.5 million in funds to the project in 2000. "That helped us build the building across the street, the parking lot and the library here in Town, and the final thing was this performing arts center," said Chad Houck, President and Admin

of Services for Cerro Coso Community College. The Measure U tax, approved by voters a decade after the Measure C bond, is used to fund mobility, recreation, and arts and culture, and was also essential for the project's funding. The project was approved in 2019 as a 298-seat theater and, but it was halted in 2020 when construction cost estimates came in at \$33 million. It took a private donor, and a collaboration between Mammoth Lakes Foundation, HMC Architects and the Town for planners to scale the project back into the realm of possibility. But then another hurdle came in September of 2024, when Patterson identified a problem with KCCD's contribution. Because those funds were accrued through school bonds, the project qualified as a Division of the State Architect (DSA) project, prompting higher, more expensive standards for the new building and the existing theater. Again, it looked like the project was off the table. It was only after a series of negotiations and a lot of drama that the Town, DSA, and KCCD were able to work out an agreement so the school funds could only be used for construction, not operation, and therefore exempt from the regulations. Phew. That's 25 years, countless performances in borrowed spaces, and more than a few near-dead ends. And still, construction is just getting started.

Sierra Classic Theatre & Mammoth Lakes Repertory Theatre Present

ROMEO & JULIET

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- 27-28 MAMMOTH FEEL GOOD FESTIVAL

JULY

- 3-6 ARTS ON THE 4TH AND CELEBRATIONS
- 4 4TH OF JULY PARADE
- 4 POPS IN THE PARK
- 4-5 GIDDYUP COUNTRY MUSIC
- 5 SUMMIT SUNSET PARTY
- 11-12 MAMMOTH JAZZFEST
- 16-27 THE UNBOUND CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL:
WEDNESDAYS, FRIDAYS AND SUNDAYS
- 18-20 MAMMOTH REGGAE FESTIVAL
- 25-26 MAMMOTH VILLAGEFEST
- 25-27 MAMMOTH LAKES OPEN AIR ARTS AND
CRAFTS FAIR
- 26 ANNUAL KIDS FISHING FESTIVAL

AUGUST

- 7/31-3 MAMMOTH FESTIVAL OF BEERS AND
BLUESAPALOOZA
- 6 FAMILY FUN DAY AT THE VILLAGE
- 8-9 MAMMOTH MARGARITA FESTIVAL
- 15-16 MAMMOTH WINE WEEKEND
- 16 MAMMOTH 50K PEDALPALOOZA
- 22-23 MAMMOTH ROCKS
- 29-31 MAMMOTH ROCK N RYE
- 31 ANNUAL WAVE RAVE SKATE CONTEST
- 31 SUMMIT SUNSET PARTY

SEPTEMBER

- 6 MAMMOTH ROLL AND SOUL
- 6 MAMMOTH GRAN FONDO
- 12-14 FLASH FOXY TRAD FEST
- 12-14 MAMMOTH TUFF
- 18-21 MAMMOTH TRAILFEST
- 20 HEALTH AND WELLNESS FAIR
- 26-30 THE MAMMOTH

OCTOBER

- 4-5 SPARTAN SUPER WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS
- 8 REBELLE RALLY



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ARTS

TEENAGE WASTELAND

By Libre

Shakespeare in the Woods, Mammoth's annual Shakespeare Festival, opened on August 5th with their production of Romeo and Juliet at Eagle Lodge. The cast featured local Mammoth teenagers and was directed by Allison Page. Underneath a nearly full moon, Juliet (Brooke Miller) and Romeo (Jack Orozco) ensnared the hearts of a frigid and bundled audience.

Page's production placed the classic play in a contemporary setting, to a late 2010s pop soundtrack. The play featured hits like "Poker Face" by Lady Gaga and "Take me to Church" by Hozier. The casted teenagers were dressed in trendy clothes: low-rise jeans, buttoned denim dresses, Vans sneakers. They sipped on fake Corona beers and walked with swagger. Page converted the traditional Friar Laurence to Professor Laurence, making him a local environmental studies professor instead of the church minister.

Page wanted to keep the feud and the setting ambiguous. The only visible difference between the two families are the color schemes they're dressed in: blue, for Montague, and red, for Capulet. She turned to scholarship, listening to podcasts and reading articles about how to direct and produce the play.

"There's a series of theater productions that placed it in a very specific setting," Page said, in an interview with the Sheet.

She pointed to productions like West Side Story or Baz Luhrmann's 1996 film adaptation. "But I don't think Shakespeare meant it that way."

Page explained that the feud was rooted in baseless, ancient hate. She said didn't want the audience to pick sides. Instead, "this is a tale of warning for the older generation, said by the younger generation. Do better."

Page purposefully cast teenagers between thirteen and eighteen. Miller and Orozco are both seventeen.

"I wanted it to feel real," Page said.

Miller reflected that although Juliet's teenage experience doesn't exactly echo her own. She is more guarded; Juliet is more vulnerable.

"But like, this is such a thing that only teenagers would do," Miller said.

Page's version of the play focused more on the family dynamics that laid the foundation for the teenage tragedy. She made Lady Capulet (Delaney Wiitala) the play's central villain, giving her the majority of Lord Capulet's lines, which created an all powerful and demanding mother. This change in script allowed Miller and Wiitala to gorgeously capture the complexities of mother/daughter relationships through Shakespeare's lens. Juliet found solace and company in Nona, her nurse, played by a particularly compelling Brenda Belaunzaran, a classically trained actress from Mexico. The scenes of the



From left Petra (Julianne Bassler), Benvolio (Ana Swisher), Romeo (Jack Orozco), Ava (Hannah Reeves), and the Capulet's Servant (Rain Wiitala).

play I found the most engaging were ones that included her.

On the Montague side, Romeo is raised by his aging grandmother (Gail Swain). Their interactions in the play are limited — perhaps due to the hour that Page decided to cut from the original script. Instead, the audience sees Romeo's character played through his interactions with his friends: Mercutio (Summer Furness), Benvolio (Ana Swisher and Stella Vanderhurst), Ava (Hannah Reeves), and Petra (Julianne Bassler).

"It's really Romeo's story," Page said.

I initially wondered if the ambiguity in setting would make this iteration of Romeo and Juliet fall flat. I wondered if I wouldn't be able to identify with the characters, or find myself relating to Romeo or Juliet. How could I truly understand what was sowing the seeds of hate if I didn't know where the play was set? As I watched the production, these thoughts

subsided. I was delighted by Romeo's boyishness, his love of love and desire to be known. I adored the balcony scene, the one where Juliet spoke about the moon as it shone over her head. My heart ached for Romeo and his posse when Tybalt killed Mercutio.

But what made this iteration of Romeo and Juliet most endearing for me was taking part in the Sierra Classic Theatre community. I loved that Summer Furness's sister sat in the front row of the audience, watching her sister play Mercutio. I loved that I met Miller's mother after the show, that she had also recently acted in plays directed by Page. I loved that the audience was full of people, cheering on the teenagers attempting Shakespeare. It was clear to me how bonded the cast was, and how much they cared for each other.

"We're a family off stage," Orozco said,

more SHAKESPEARE, page 9

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SHAKESPEARE

continued from page 8

in an interview with the Sheet. “I’m a very small part in all of this and just got lucky that my name is on the poster.”

For me, Tuesday night’s production solidified how special this place is. I’m new here. In June, I graduated from my small New Hampshire college. I was raised in Alta, Utah, a tiny ski-town with a big city close by. I’d never been to Mammoth before and I was terrified to move here. I was worried I wouldn’t like it, that I would find it isolating and remote, that I would be lonely. It hasn’t been easy, but I’ve been welcomed with open arms. If Romeo and Juliet is a play that conveys a lesson from the youth to adults, then Mammoth is a community that listened.



Above left, Sampson (Margaux Carleton) in the trash can and Georgia (Pearl Johnson).

Cast in alphabetical order:

- Petra – Julianne Bassler
- Nona – Brenda Belaunzaran
- Sampson – Margaux Carleton
- Mercutio – Summer Furness
- Chief Prince – Ronnell Hill
- Lord Capulet – Jamie Howard
- Balthazar/Georgia – Pearl Johnson
- Tybalt – Nakoa Lee
- Professor Laurence – Kenneth “Æd-wyrrde” Needham
- Juliet – Brooke Miller
- Romeo – Jack Orozco
- Ava/Johanna – Hannah Reeves
- Lady Montague – Gail Swain
- Benvolio – Ana Swisher
- Paris – Sam Taylor
- Benvolio – Stella Vanderhurst
- Lady Capulet – Delany Wiitala
- Capulet’s Servant – Rain Wiitala



Above right, Nona (Brendaa Belaunzaran) comforts Juliet (Brooke Miller).

OBITUARY
STEVEN R. WETHERWAX 1956-2025

Steven R “WAX” Wetherwax, 68, passed away on July 7, 2025. Steve was born December 11, 1956 in Burbank, CA. In 1967, the family moved to Mammoth Lakes. Steve got his first job working at the Cortina (now Morrison’s) as a busboy.

Steve graduated from Mammoth High School in 1975 and started working at Mammoth Mountain Ski Area. In the ‘80s, Steve followed in his father’s footsteps and started working in construction. In the early ‘90s he started his own construction company, Sub Zero Construction, where he became a well known fixture in town.

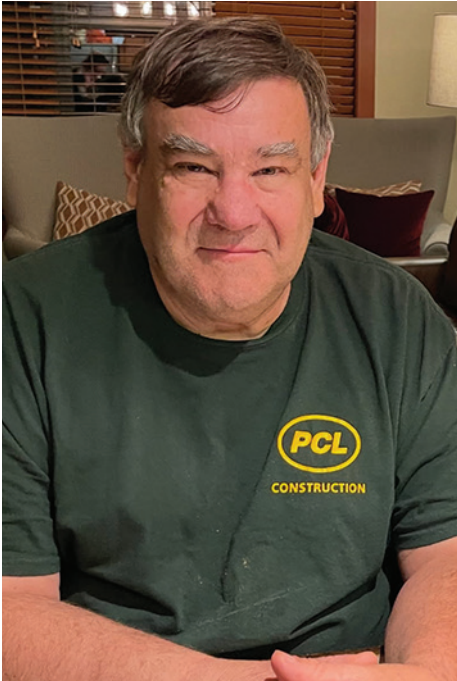
He had a passion for motor sports. Growing up, he always wanted to be on a motorcycle, snowmobile, or watercraft. He spent many years going to NASCAR races in Fontana with his brother, Kent. Steve was a long-time member of the Clampers (E Clampus Vitus, Bodie chapter).

He is survived by his son, Steven and wife Stephanie, his daughter Kristen Diaz and her husband Stephen and his stepdaughter Melanie Burke and her husband Tony.

As well as sister Karen Fabiano and husband Nick and brother Kent Wetherwax and his wife Lynn.

He is preceded in death by his father, Alfred Wetherwax and his mother, Peggy Wetherwax and brother Todd Wetherwax.

A celebration of life will be held upstairs at Burgers Restaurant on October 18, 2025 at 12 pm.



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Outlaw Saloon Happy Hour Monday through Friday from 4-6 p.m. *More info: See ad p. 10*
The Mogul happy hour 5:30-6:30 p.m. in the bar. Food and drink specials.
Main Street Pizza - See ad page 9 for details.
Distant Brewing happy hour Monday-Thursday from 3-5pm. \$1/off beer/wine/cider/seltzer/kombucha

August 8-9/ 12th Annual Mammoth Margarita Festival at the Village in Mammoth. Time: 5-9:45 p.m.
Crooked Stuff Live Band/DJ mash-up @ Liberty. Disco Punk for the People! **For Liberty music schedule, see ad p. 9*

Sunday, August 10/ Live music @ Cardinal Village Resort in Aspendell. Time: 1-4 p.m.

Monday, August 11/ Open mic @ Distant Brewing. Time: 6-9 p.m.

Tuesday, August 12/ Karaoke @ Liberty. Starts 10 p.m.

Wednesday, August 13/ Eddy Evans plays jazz sax @ Liberty in Mammoth from 4-6 p.m.

Thursday, August 14/ Bicletas por la Paz plays world music fusion @ the Tioga Mobil Mart in Lee Vining. Time: 6-9 p.m.

Friday, August 15/ Bicletas por la Paz plays world music fusion @ Liberty in Mammoth. Starts 9:30 p.m.
Tropicool Dance Party & Limbo Contest @ Wanaaha Casino in Bishop. Limbo contest starts 10 p.m. *More info: See ad p. 5*

August 15-16/ Mammoth Wine weekend kicks off in the Village. \$\$\$ *For more info, see ad p. 3.*

TOWN STUFF

August 8-24/ Mammoth Shakespeare Festival continues outdoors @ Eagle Lodge with Romeo and Juliet through this weekend and A Midsummer Night's Dream opening Tuesday. *See ad p. 4 for dates and showtimes*

Saturday, August 9/ Wild Together Market @ Bar Sierra Parking lot. Time: 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Open air marketplace curated by Wild Sage Creative.
Death Valley Brill Car Train Rides at Laws Museum in Bishop, located just east of town off Highway 6, from 10 a.m. 'til 2 p.m.
June Lake Fire Dept. annual BBQ. Time: 12-6 p.m. Location: Gull Lake Park. Music, raffle, kids games, more.
Free Fly-Tying Clinic @ Juniper Springs Resort to support the Crowley Lake Fish Foundation. Time: 4:30-5:30 p.m. Sponsors: Performance Anglers, Ernie's.

TOWN STUFF

Saturday, August 9 (cont.)/ All about Bears Campfire Talk. Learn from a Sierra Forever interpretive specialist at Twin Lakes Campground. Talk starts at 6:30 p.m.
Geology Walk at Panum Crater with a Mono Lake Committee volunteer. Time: 10-11:30 a.m. Meet at the trailhead kiosk on Panum Crater road off Highway 120. Walk is about two miles on a sandy trail.

Sunday, August 10/ Stroll and Sketch. Free and Artsy Interpretive Walk in Lundy Canyon from 9:30-10:30a.m. Meeting Location: Lundy Canyon Trailhead. You will be provided with art supplies.

Monday, August 11/ The Bishop Community Band plays concerts in the Park. Time: Every Monday @ 8 p.m. Music will include marches, popular songs, jazz arrangements and popular novelty numbers.
Bishop City Council meets 6 p.m at Council Chambers, 377 W. Line Street.

August 11-14/ Kids Summer Film Series @ Minaret Cinemas w/support from Mammoth Hospital. Previously released kids' films on the big screen at 11 a.m. daily. \$2.50 for a walk-up ticket. **This week: Curious George: Show me the Money**

Tuesday, August 12/ Mono County Supervisors meet. Time: 9 a.m. Location: Bridgeport Courthouse or monocounty.ca.gov.

TOWN STUFF

Tuesday, August 12 (cont.)/Join the Mammoth Lakes Board of REALTORS® for a Townhall to discuss research and survey results regarding the impacts of Short-Term Rentals in Mono County. Time: 5:30-7:30 p.m. Location: June Lake Community Center, 90 W. Granite Ave

Wednesday, August 13/ Womens Wednesday Rides @ Mammoth Mountain Bike Park from 4:30-7 p.m. A \$10 ticket is required for non-pass holders. Meet outside the Adventure Center by the MTB rentals at 4:30 p.m.
Wednesday Worknights with the Mammoth Lakes System Trail Crew. Starts 5 p.m. Register for location/more info at townofmammothlakes.ca.gov
Mammoth Lakes Planning and Economic Development Commission meets 9 a.m. in Suite Z, Minaret Mall.

Thursday, August 14/ Trashy Thursdays @ Sherwin Meadows Trailhead from 5-6 p.m. Help clean up our town!
Farm to Table Market runs 3-7 p.m. at the Bishop Unified Methodist Church, in partnership with Eastern Sierra Farm Fresh.

UPCOMING

August 16: Native Plant Society annual native plant sale. Time: 9-11 a.m. Location: White Mtn. Research Station at 3000 East Line St. in Bishop.

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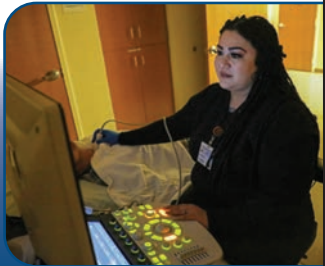
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KLUSMIRE

ON THE ROAD

After a trek to the East side of the USA then idling through South Lake Tahoe and soaking up the chilly Bay area ambiance, I think it's time for me to call and end to the 2025 travel season.

Not that those trips weren't fun. They involved visiting our quirky, entertaining and lovable family members instead of forking over too much cash at tourist traps to take the 47,592nd photo of a famous Instagram scene.

As everyone knows, travel can expand your pinched little parochial horizons and this year's trips have done that. Sort of.

The first consciousness-raising experience landed on my taste buds courtesy of an upscale bakery/deli in the bay area. The sign on the wall was rather impressive. It announced the bakery used 30-year-old sourdough starter. I didn't know that such a thing was even possible. Anyway, regardless of the age of the starter, eating one of their bagels was nearly a religious experience. Crunchy, browned crusts surrounding a sweet, soft ring of bread. The key ingredient: Honey. Incredible. I could taste it and smell it. Never heard of such a thing.

The second miracle was the gluten free bagel which, I was informed, actually tasted pretty good. I took their word for it, and declined a sample.

As a committed bread lover (between Great Basin and Schatt's I haven't had grocery store bread in decades), I always check out bread's high-end cousin, the croissant, when venturing into new territory. In Montpelier, Vermont, a little French bakery offered croissant indulgence on a Continental scale. A croissant should be made of 55 layers of dough, with 27 of those being pure butter, the bakery sign informed us rubes. Their croissant more than delivered on light, buttery deliciousness. After two croissants I talked to God.

During a quick family conference, we unanimously agreed that if we ever moved to Vermont we would pass on the pastoral, rural towns, despite their quaint small-town vibes and church steeples, and land in any structure within walking distance of the bakery God's honest truth. Hey, I asked.

Speaking of quaint, Montpelier is the Capitol of Vermont. Big white capitol building with a shiny gold dome and imposing, gray granite office buildings and a thriving downtown full of solid brick buildings. The city's population is about 8,000. That's fewer people than reside in the Greater Bishop Metro Area. Ponder that.

Back to sweet treats. Vermont is the nation's top maple syrup producer. So maple syrup is in virtually everything.

Case in point: the Creemee. That is just soft-serve ice cream laced with maple syrup and loaded with more butterfat than regular soft serve. The extra butterfat makes it "creamy," thus the name. (Butter seems to be a theme, here, and I'm good with that.) Creemees have to be rationed. Dangerous.

Water should also be rationed (but not in the Eastern Sierra where we have convinced ourselves that watering the lawn is actually "groundwater recharge"). New toilets being deployed in the Bay Area with two flush options make saving water as easy as pushing a button. The "half" button and the "full" button are on top of the toilet tank.

Here's the deal, the half button shoots a minimal amount of water in the toilet, and the full button gives it a good solid wave of water. Sounds innovative unless you are old enough to remember the vintage 1970s Era Hippy Water Saving Slogan: "Yellow is Mellow; Brown Flush it Down."

While we're soaking in nostalgia, I may as well inform one and all that the von Trapp family of "Sound of Music" fame escaped from Austria to America. They landed in the mountains of Vermont near Stowe where they developed a lodge, farm, ranch and brewery, which you can visit. Singing, "The Hills Are Alive ..." completely optional.

Other hills that are far too alive surround South Lake Tahoe at the Nevada/California line. My god what a mess.

Massive traffic backups, too many people, too many buildings and a totally urbanized feel and look. Makes Mammoth Lakes feel like Bodie.

The little burgh of Walker delivered some unexpected inspiration. Lining 395 through town were dozens of flag poles on both sides of the highway. The flags said, "Welcome to Walker." Or I think that's what they said because they were just hanging and not flying in the wind. So I had to slow down to look. Bingo.

Independence and Big Pine should consider installing lines of flags along 395 through both towns in the ongoing and mostly unsuccessful effort to slow down speeding traffic. Drivers would either get sort of distracted or wonder if they forgot a flay-flying holiday and slow down.

To add to the impact, I suggest the flags should carry a pity message. In Latin. Then people would have to stop and Google the foreign verbiage to learn they are being told, "Slow Down, Stupid."

Jon Klusmire of Bishop never rules out a road trip to Hing's Donuts to expand his horizons.



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Oh this is the week the real PRE-SEASON starts in the NFL. Everybody gets to roll out their much-improved teams. Everyone gets to test their draft picks and the leftovers they got in free agency. Teams have NO holes. They have been running around in shorts, looking sleek and fast, but now they get to face real players and real coaches and see ... OH CRAP. WE ARE JUST NOT GOOD ENOUGH.

I saw a quote this week from WR Tyreek Hill where he said he didn't understand the Dolphins offense the last 3 years. Oh man. He said he didn't understand the route concepts. Well, that is something that YOUR NUMBER 1 RECEIVER should be fully in grasp of. He also said he didn't take notes in meetings, either. But now he does. Well it sounds like you DIDN'T CARE to understand the offense to me, but now that you're getting older and the gap between your skills and the rest of the league is diminishing, maybe it's time to start.

The Dolphins. Can we stop hearing about the genius of Mike McDaniel? He is 28-23 in the regular season and 0-2 in the postseason. His offense is great against bums, but gets wrecked by good teams. It's time for the Dolphins to hire the next dumbass to continue their run of playoff ineptitude. They haven't won a

playoff game since 2000. The last time the Dolphins won a playoff game, Castaway and Gladiator were the hot new movies. Not that new Gladiator they completely screwed up, but the original GOOD Gladiator movie. Maybe they should make McDaniel a castaway and fire his ass.

And Tyreek Hill had the nerve to tell the media he wants the Dolphins to change which RB they use for goal line carries. Oh, you're the coach now. After admitting you don't understand the offense. And McDaniel, the great head coach and leader of men announced that change has already been made. Instead of telling Hill to learn his own job. He is too soft. And a losing streak shy of a mutiny.

Tyler Shough is the ROOKIE QB for the Saints. This is funny. This guy is like FUDGE from Higher Learning. He was in college longer than a tenured professor. He is 8 months older than Trey Lance, who was drafted in 2021. Huh? That is comical. Oddly enough if he throws 4 TD passes this year he will have more than Trey Lance has in his career. Let that one sink in.

Trey Lance was born the last year the Dolphins won a playoff game. This rant is just linked from one thing to the next. Maybe the Dolphins should sign Trey Lance as their QB to backup Oatmeal Brain (Tua Tagovailoa) cuz he is gonna

get another concussion. Then Trey Lance could bring everything full circle and lead the Dolphins to a playoff win. Because I saw Trey Lance play in the Hall of Fame game (first preseason game of the year) and he looked like a real QB. MAYBE he was too young and inexperienced when drafted and tossed to the wolves by the QB guru Kyle Shanahan. Maybe the Cowboys didn't have the coaching staff to develop him either. But it looks like Charger Coach Jim Harbaugh knows what to say to him. Harbaugh has the sauce. He made Kaepernick look great, JJ McCarthy look great. Maybe coaching matters ...

Jerry Jones can't stop talking. There should be a rule that an owner can't be GM and own his team. Or he can't be GM after the age of 70. Because rich white men after the age of 70 will say anything. At that point they don't give a damn what people think and let's be honest, don't you just get more direct at that age. You don't care, you got nothing to lose. Just say it. I fully expect Jerry to say at some point ... THAT BOY IS PAID PRETTY WELL AND NEEDS TO SHUT UP AND GET BACK OUT ON THE PLANTATION ... I MEAN FIELD. He is just getting senile and saying all kinds of stuff. Allegedly now he refuses to negotiate with Micah Parsons' agent. He reportedly says he and Micah had a handshake deal worked out

but when Micah said to contact his agent, Jerry and his little crony son Stephen refused to. It's like they're just gonna wait him out to see if he caves. It's unethical and pathetic. Trying to negotiate with him so he doesn't have representation? I would ask for a trade, too. Then hold out all training camp and play out the season with some massive personal insurance policy. I would also file a grievance for Jones trying to circumvent his legal representation.

QB Quinn Ewers was in college and a media darling. At Ohio State, they were paying him NIL money to be a backup. Then he went to Texas for MORE MONEY. He was surrounded by great talent - not that great himself. He gets drafted in the 7th round and is now making LESS as a pro than he did in college. He was reportedly offered \$4 million to transfer to Miami after Texas but chose to go pro. His agent/people should be fired for bad advice. His entire 4 year rookie deal is \$4.3 million. Shoulda stayed in school. But the funniest thing is that Panini gave him a \$3 million endorsement deal. Why does a trading card company give a 7th round QB any deal? What does that do for them? This guy won't even get to hold a clipboard. He will be on the sidelines in street clothes most of the time. Is he selling cards on the sidelines?



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LUNCH

continued from page 2

Post-break featured department heads making pitches to administration and Supervisors, crying out for more help.

“We’re sinking at animal services,” was one such request, given animal intakes are up 84%.

There were also various requests for job reclassifications, to promote “equity” amongst labor and work roles.

Greenberg said the budget impact if all the requested reclassifications were granted would be \$60,000.

It was Greenberg’s recommendation to defer new job hires and reclassifications.

There was one PowerPoint slide devoted to the potential impact of state and federal budget cuts but this was hardly discussed.

In terms of capital improvement projects, Assistant CAO Meaghan McCamman said, in her best ‘crat-speak, “We have a manpower capacity constraint.” This means we’d sure love to get more done, but after giving everyone raises, there’s not enough money left to hire more people.

Greenberg made oblique reference to “working through issues” at the Consolidated Office Bldg. (COB), the prison ward cell block masquerading as staff offices in Bishop. Issues referenced were HVAC and safety. But Greenberg said “let’s talk about that offline” later so the public won’t know too many details.

Overall, the county general fund budget increased by approx. \$23 million between FY 2021-2022 and FY 2024-2025, going from budgeted expenses of \$70.2 million to \$93.4 million in that span, a 33% increase over three years.

Bear Update

Now onto the bears.
It was announced at Mammoth’s Council meeting on Wednesday that representative(s) from California’s Dept. of Fish and Wildlife will make a presentation on bears at the August 20 meeting.
CDFW’s Michael Brown spoke to The Sheet this week.

We asked him about the baited traps on the scenic loop.
Brown said “We trap for a variety of reasons, but primarily for research. GPS collars are a valuable tool.”
Brown said the collars are “temporary” and fall off or are removed within 24 months.

He disagrees with local “Bear Whisperer” Steve Searles’s assertion that CDFW has a “two-strike” policy regarding bears.
“We deal with conflict animals on a case-by-case basis,” he says.

Finally, he said the town bears trapped and relocated from Mayor Chris Bubser’s property last month are still alive.

The five-year old male has returned to Mammoth from the Glass Mountains. The yearling, said Brown, has not strayed far from the site of his relocation.

Steve Searles’s terse reply: “Per usual, what we are being told by the CDFW is contrary to what we are seeing with our own eyes.”

Speaking of the Mayor and Searles, Bubser has made a complaint to Mammoth Lakes Police regarding Searles.

The Sheet made a public records request asking for a copy of the complaint.
That request was denied. As the Town’s legal counsel Andrew Morris explained, complaints to police are exempt from public records requests because you don’t want to dissuade elected officials from seeking help in times of distress.

District Attorney Dave Anderson said no such complaint has made it to his desk.

Bluesa post-mortem

Bluesapalooza just completed its final year at the Woodsite, which is said to have been acquired by developer Mark Rafeh.

Next year’s venue is anybody’s guess. Canyon Lodge would appear to be the betting favorite.

This year’s attendance was notably smaller than the last time I volunteered about five years ago.

At that time, Mammoth Lions ran one bar for the whole day. 10-12 volunteers at peak with six cash registers running and each register five people deep. Beer pouring like water.

To be fair, these days they also sell a fair number of cocktails in a can, and

those orders are quick to fill.
This year, I worked the Saturday 4-7:30 p.m. shift. Six volunteers total. Two registers. Beer poured “to order” and when a comp ticket was proffered, the on-site bar manager stepped in to process it because I clearly couldn’t be trusted to do so.

The site was also notably empty in places whereas it used to be completely packed to overflowing. When I rolled up to Steve Earle at 3:15 p.m. Sunday I could plant myself about 20’ from the stage no problem.

My guess is spiking ticket and ancillary costs are to blame. May also explain why sightings of young people were few and far between.

The Mammoth Lakes Tourism Board showered Bluesa Promoter Rich Sherman with an extra \$75,000 this spring to turbo-market this event. Can’t wait to see that accounting. Would seem a bust.



After getting his first strike, Steve Searles is now a CDFW research project. He promised not to respond to the next serving of bait.

JOIN OUR HUSKY COACHING TEAM

Mammoth High School is Looking for Coaches!

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TO APPLY, PLEASE VISIT
mammothusd.org
Select Departments
Select Human Resources
Click on Employee Application

For Questions: klackey@mammothusd.org

City of Bishop Parking Study

The City of Bishop is currently conducting the Downtown and Residential Streets Parking Study. Its goal is to inform future land use and parking policies, guiding investments that support local retail, economic growth, walkability, and equitable access—ultimately enhancing the functionality and livability of both Downtown Bishop and nearby neighborhoods.

<https://bishop.woodpolls.com>

ESTUDIO DE ESTACIONAMIENTO DE LA CIUDAD DE BISHOP

La Ciudad de Bishop está llevando a cabo un Estudio de Estacionamiento en el Centro y las Calles Residenciales. Su objetivo es orientar futuras políticas de uso del terreno y estacionamiento, guiando inversiones que apoyen el comercio local, el crecimiento económico, la caminabilidad y el acceso equitativo —mejorando la funcionalidad y la calidad de vida tanto del centro de Bishop como de los vecindarios cercanos. La encuesta está disponible en español. Para cambiar el idioma, simplemente haga clic en el botón verde **Cambiar idioma** ubicado en la esquina izquierda de su pantalla.

<https://bishop.woodpolls.com>

MONO COUNTY ASSESSMENT APPEALS BOARD OPENINGS!

The County of Mono is accepting applications to fill five Board Member vacancies on the Assessment Appeals Board (AAB).

The AAB is a quasi-judicial body which hears taxpayer appeals to property assessments at a public hearing where evidence is submitted by both parties, the taxpayer and the Assessor’s Office. The AAB hearing process provides ‘equalization’, or fairness of the assessment of a property’s value of the property in question.

Eligibility

Individuals interested in applying must meet the following requirements: A minimum of five years’ professional experience within the state of California is required in one of the following professions:

- Certified Public Accountant or Public Accountant
- Licensed Real Estate Broker
- Attorney
- Property Appraiser Certified by 1) a Nationally Recognized Professional Organization; 2) the Office of Real Estate Appraisers; or 3) the California State Board of Equalization.

TRAINING WILL BE PROVIDED!

Compensation

Board Members receive a taxable stipend for their attendance as follows:

- \$175 per meeting (typically 8-10 meetings per year, typically 2-4 hours in duration)
- Mileage reimbursement (current IRS standard mileage rate) for travel from the Board Member’s residence to the hearing location.

For more information or an application, please contact the Clerk of the Board’s Office at BOS@mono.ca.gov or visit our website at <https://monocounty.ca.gov/assessment-appeals>.

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