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Marin Independent Journal

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2020 BALLOT

Novato schools plan district elections

Board acts to start process before receiving likely suit

By Keri Brenner
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Rather than wait for a legal hammer to drop, Novato Unified School District trustees voted Thursday to initiate, on their

own, a switch to district elections for board members by the November 2020 ballot.

The change, if completed successfully, means that Novato school district voters will elect their board members in 2020 based on the candidates' home

neighborhoods instead of the existing district-wide system.

NUSD's board of trustees voted 5-0, with two members absent, at a special meeting to proceed with the process. Kris Cosca, deputy superintendent, said the board, on the advice of legal counsel, decided not to wait to receive a warning letter from a Malibu attorney, as has already happened with two Marin city councils, San Rafael and Novato.

By moving proactively, without first receiving a letter, NUSD



Cosca

stands to save the \$30,000 legal fee charged by Malibu attorney Kevin Shenkman, as well as having a longer window of time to make the switch than the tight 90-day deadline afforded the two cities, Cosca said.

Other Marin school districts, such as San Rafael City Schools, could follow Novato's lead. The San Rafael Board of Education

will have an agenda item on the issue at its regular public meeting set for 6 p.m. Monday in the board meeting room, 310 Nova Albion Way, San Rafael, said Christina Perrino, district communications director. More details will be available once the agenda is posted by the end of the day Friday.

Cosca said Novato had several reasons for taking quick action: finances, a longer time frame and "it's the right thing to do."

DISTRICT » PAGE 2

SAN RAFAEL

FUN AT MARIN FARM DAY



ALAN DEP — MARIN INDEPENDENT JOURNAL

A horse meets 19-month-old Rooney Calderon and his mother, Anabely Reyes of Novato during the annual Marin County Farm Day at the Marin Center Exhibition Hall in San Rafael on Thursday. The event included hands-on activities, animals and interactive exhibits focused on agriculture and the environment. The theme "Harvest Moon" was incorporated into the countywide elementary school artwork quilt project, essay and photo contests. Winners were displayed at the event.

PATH USE

Electric bikes get backing of parks panel

By Richard Halstead
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Electric bicycles may soon be allowed on paved bicycle and multiuse pathways within parks operated by the county.

At its meeting Thursday, the Marin County Parks and Open Space Commission voted unanimously to make the change. The proposal will go next to the Board of Supervisors for final approval.

Exactly where electric bikes should be allowed in Marin is still very much at issue even as they are being viewed increasingly as a key means for reducing car trips.

The Marin Municipal Water District board of directors also met Thursday and voted to form a citizens advisory committee to study the issue of whether electric bikes should be permitted in the Mount Tamalpais watershed.

Both MMWD and Marin County Parks prohibit people from riding electric bikes on trails unless they are doing so to compensate for a physical disability.

BIKES » PAGE 4

RUSSIAN RIVER FLOODING

Sonoma starts housing aid for victims

County hopes plan can help some from being homeless

By Mary Callahan
The Press Democrat

Alarmed by the prospect of people becoming homeless in the wake of recent flooding along the lower Russian River, Sonoma County officials have moved to provide short-term financial help and expert housing assistance to help the most destitute flood survivors recover.

The program is starting with \$150,000, so its reach will be limited, officials said.

But the idea is to put a plan in place, see how far it goes and fig-

ure out what else may be needed, said Sonoma County Supervisor Lynda Hopkins, whose west county district bore the brunt of the damage when the river overflowed causing the worst flooding in Sonoma County since 1995.

"I'll be honest: I don't think it's going to be enough," she said, "but it's going to be a start, and it will help us get the data we need to figure out how much need is out there — how much demand there is."

The details are still being finalized, and the service will not be operational until some time



JANE TYSKA — BAY AREA NEWS GROUP

The Russian River floods parts of downtown Guerneville on Feb. 28.

late next week, said Tim Miller, executive director for West County Community Services, the nonprofit agency contracted

to run what's being called the temporary housing assistance program.

FLOODING » PAGE 2

LAW TARGETED

Trump might limit states in offshore drilling plan

By Anna M. Phillips
and Rosanna Xia
Los Angeles Times

When President Trump proposed opening nearly the entire U.S. coastline to more offshore oil and gas drilling, the backlash from states seeking exemptions was swift.

Governors, Republican and Democratic, and state legislatures up and down the Atlantic and Pacific coastlines protested so vigorously that the administration promised to consult with them before finalizing any plans.

Instead, Trump is quietly laying the groundwork to weaken a decades-old federal law that empowers California and other states to slow and even stop offshore development in federal waters.

DRILLING » PAGE 2

SOUTHERN AFRICA
Death toll from cyclone surpasses 500
 Deadly flooding continues after Cyclone Idai lashed Africa, as torrential rains caused a dam to overflow in Zimbabwe. **PAGE A8**



POLICY
US endorses Israel's Golan sovereignty
 President Trump abruptly declared the U.S. will recognize Israel's sovereignty over the disputed Golan Heights. **PAGE A6**

BUSINESS
 Dow Jones 25,962.51 (+216.84)
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