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DAILY JOURNAL



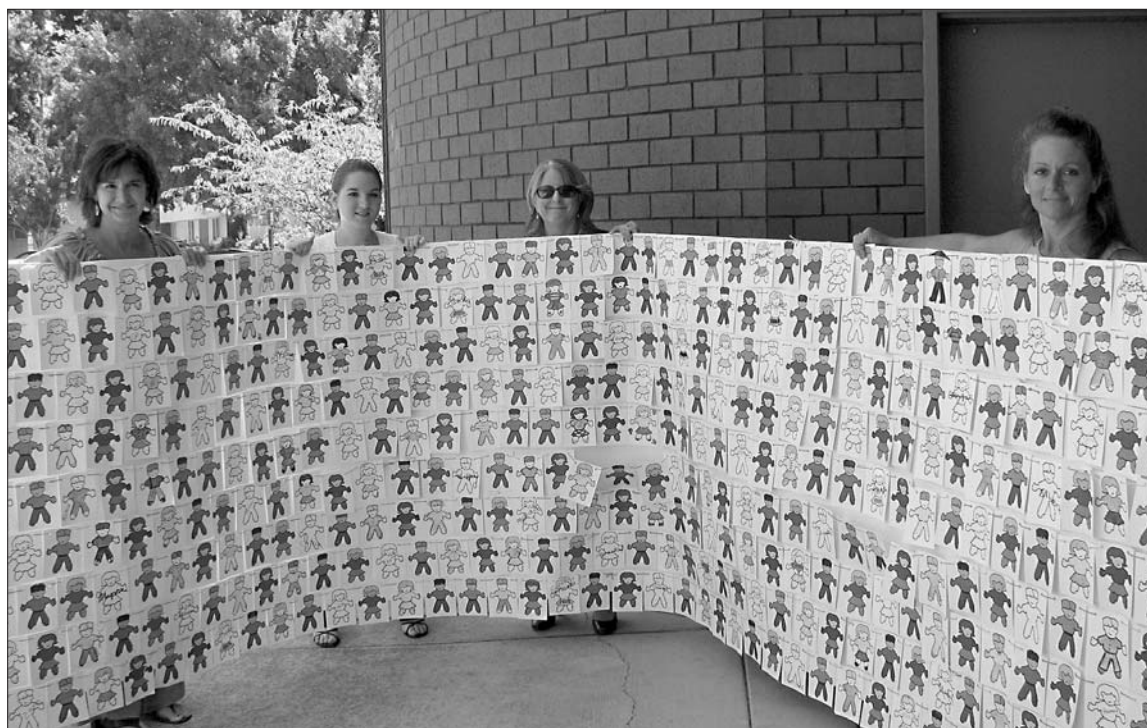
Tuesday: Mostly cloudy; H 66° L 40°

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Submitted photos
Left to right, Nancy Eachus, Amanda Wolter, Cathy Frey and Becky Rankin hold a banner of paper dolls that are meant to represent each of the 1,000 county residents who lost health coverage due to state cuts.



ARCH executive director Cathy Frey addresses an audience during the National Health Center Week.

Holding up the ARCH

Community health braces for next round of state budget impacts

By CAROLE BRODSKY
Special for the Journal

Despite the fact that Cathy Frey, executive director of the Alliance for Rural Community Health, says she must take a "wait and see" attitude toward this year's State budget, she and her colleagues at community clinics throughout the county are preparing for devastating cuts to an already weakened health care delivery system.

ARCH, which includes the Anderson and Long Valley Health Centers, as well as the Mendocino Coast Clinics, the Mendocino Community Health Clinic and Redwood Coast Medical Health Services, provided primary care services to 47,000 people in 2009. "We served 50 percent of our county's population. No other group in the State can claim this accomplishment," says Frey.

During National Health Center Week, Frey used paper dolls to represent each of the 1,000 county residents who lost health coverage, driving home the point to the Board of Supervisors. Due to the State's continued insolvency, Frey expects more drastic cuts during 2010.

"The Governor is proposing eliminating even more of what he considers optional benefits," says Frey. Those include physical therapy, medical equipment and supplies, prosthetics, hearing aids, hospice, occupational therapy, rehabilitation for mental health patients and substance abuse treatment. "He is also proposing reductions in Medi-Cal eligibility. This will put more and more people into an uninsured category."

Additional proposals on the

chopping block include the elimination of the Family Planning Project and the Every Woman Counts Project- which addresses breast and cervical cancer issues.

Frey explains because the State is facing a \$6.9 billion deficit, the administration is again faced with cutting where no cuts are possible.

"Irrespective of the deficit, the Governor is again suggesting the elimination of the Adult Day Health Care Program, and reducing benefits and increasing premiums for the Healthy Families Program," Frey notes. There is even talk of quashing vision benefits for children, according to Frey.

"The State is in such dire financial straits that cuts will happen," Frey notes. She says another impact for Mendocino County is the distinct possibility that Medi-Cal itself will move into a managed care system. "This was originally proposed in 2005 and has been put on hold, but the State is pushing hard for it."

Frey says that a Medi-Cal managed care system would "pose a whole host of challenges for a rural county," noting that managed care is traditionally implemented in urban areas with a greater physician population and more access to a wide array of medical services.

Currently the State is in discussion with the Partnership Health Plan of California, which created a managed care system in Solano County and more recently moved into Napa, Yolo and Sonoma Counties. "They are probably better than Blue Cross/Blue Shield because of their slightly local presence,"

says Frey.

Medi-Cal patients would be assigned to a provider who would act as gatekeeper for all of their health care. "You would go through your primary doctor for everything- specialty care or simple illness," explains Frey. She is unsure how successful a program like this would be in Mendocino County. "When you think about specialists and hospitals, take that structure and put it into our county, it may not be viable. We have serious transportation issues and a lack of specialists. A patient in Laytonville could be told she has to go to a doctor in Vallejo or Santa Rosa. Is the managed care organization picking up the tab for the transportation?" Frey asks.

Frey speculates some of these decisions will be delayed until after the gubernatorial election. "My guess is that we won't know what's going to happen until 2011." But she cautions there are many pitfalls between now and next year. "What if the State and Partnership Health Plan can't agree on a rate? What if no managed care entity wants to come to our county?"

What Frey does know is that the rural clinics will be the focus of the delivery system. "We are already taking up more slack. We are now the tracking agency for tuberculosis, because the county is too financially decimated to continue this service." Frey notes that Alcohol and other Drug services, usually paid for by county general funds, may be slated for the budget ax, and community health centers may have to take on more individuals needing

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Senior Center concerned about more cuts

By ZACK CINEK
The Daily Journal

The Ukiah Senior Center and its supporters are concerned about the state's proposed 2010 to 2011 budget that would eliminate Adult Day Health Care save the general fund \$104 million.

The ADHC program provides health, therapeutic and social services to people who may otherwise spend their days in a nursing home.

"This is such an important program for our community," said Terry Burns of the Ukiah Valley Medical Center.

John McCowen, 2nd District County Supervisor and vice president of the Senior Center's board of directors, noted that there have been concerns of the budget ax dropping for years.

"It still could at any time," McCowen said.

Donna Squires is the ADHC program

See CUTS, Page 8

City Council to consider a 'very high fire hazard' severity zone

The Daily Journal

The Ukiah City Council on Wednesday will consider establishing a "very high fire hazard" severity zone inside city limits.

If adopted, the new zone would include new building standards, defensible space standards and seller disclosure standards, to mitigate and reduce the intensity of uncontrolled fires.

The proposed ordinance that would implement the zone map and new standards comes as a result of state law, implemented after the loss of life and property in the 1991 Oakland Hills fire, that requires the state to identify fire hazard severity zones for the new standards.

The City Council adopted the standards required for the new "very high fire hazard" zone, and public review began in August 2009 when the city's public safety staff began sending letters to property owners who would be affected. The comment period ended Feb. 1.

The council will also hear City Manager Jane Chambers' proposed plan for preparing the city's 2010-11 budget. She proposes seven council workshops beginning Feb. 22 with a discussion of changes, policies and goals.

She also proposes to have public outreach concerning the city's fiscal condition in April, including two workshops to review water and sewer rates and the city's capital improvement plan.

On the heels of that agenda item is one that contemplates "possible adoption of tax sharing and annexation discussion principles for the county of Mendocino and the city of Ukiah."

The two governments held "a number of discussions" about sharing sales taxes for the urban areas of the Ukiah Valley, and delivery of county and city services to the region, according to a report prepared for the council.

Former Mendocino County CEO Tom Mitchell renewed the talks recently when he told the board he would pursue getting a Costco in the unincorporated area, an prospect that would threaten the city's efforts to get Costco on its redevelopment land on Airport Park Boulevard.

The City Council is considering a set of principles to guide future policy that could result from ongoing discussions.

Mitchell said the day before he resigned that he planned to have the principles before the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors for adoption later in February.

Among other things, the principles assert a tax-sharing agreement would reduce or eliminate competition for tax revenue and allow more focus on land use planning in development decisions.

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The world briefly

US rockets kill 12 Afghan civilians in offensive against Taliban as Marines scour for bombs

MARJAH, Afghanistan (AP) — Two U.S. rockets slammed into a home Sunday outside the southern Taliban stronghold of Marjah, killing 12 civilians after Afghanistan's president appealed to NATO to take care in its campaign to seize the town.

Inside Marjah, Marines encountered "death at every corner" in their second day of a massive offensive to capture this bleak mud-brick city filled with booby traps, hardcore Taliban fighters and civilians unsure where to cast their loyalty.

Marines confronted a fierce sandstorm as they ducked in and out of doorways and hid behind bullet-riddled walls to evade sniper fire. To the north, U.S. Army troops fought skirmishes with Taliban fighters, calling in a Cobra attack helicopter against the insurgents.

Insurgents littered the area with booby traps and explosives before the offensive, and the sound of controlled detonations — about three every hour — punctuated the day along with mortars and rocket fire.

"Our children are very scared by the explosions. When will it end?" asked Zaher, a 25-year-old poppy farmer who like many Afghans goes by one name.

Behind Clinton and Biden, US seeks to shore up diplomatic push against Iran's nuclear program

DOHA, Qatar (AP) — U.S. officials sought to shore up support Sunday for a tougher stand against Iran's nuclear program by saying Tehran had left the world little choice and expressing renewed confidence that holdout China would come around to harsher U.N. penalties.

Even as the Obama administration intensifies its diplomacy, Iran is showing little

sign of bending to the will of its critics. Past U.N. sanctions have had little effect. Some outside experts have detected what they believe are new slowdowns in Iran's nuclear advances, but the Islamic republic is believed headed toward having nuclear weapons capability in perhaps a few years — estimates vary as to when.

President Barack Obama's senior military adviser called for more time for diplomatic pressure to work and said from Israel, which has hinted that it might attack if negotiations to contain Iran's nuclear ambitions failed, that such action could have "unintended consequences" throughout the Middle East. Israel views Iran's nuclear program as a threat to its very existence.

While diplomatic patience has its limits, "we're not there yet," U.S. Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said in Tel Aviv.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, on a quick visit to Persian Gulf allies Qatar and Saudi Arabia, told a forum on U.S.-Muslim relations that Iran has not lived up to its nuclear obligations and has rebuffed U.S. and international efforts to engage in serious talks. She said Iran has a right to nuclear power, but only if shown unequivocally it is to be used just for peaceful purposes.

France wins Nordic combined gold as US medals for first time with Johnny Spillane's silver

WHISTLER, British Columbia (AP) — The Americans broke through the Nordic combined barrier Sunday, winning their first Olympic medal in the sport dominated since its inception by the Europeans.

But it could have been even better. Jason Lamy Chappuis — who was born in Missoula, Mont., but has always raced for France — overtook Johnny Spillane on the final straightaway for the gold medal, winning the individual race in 25 minutes, 47.1 seconds, four-tenths of a second ahead of Spillane.

Italy's Alessandro Pittin won the bronze, finishing eight-tenths of a second behind Chappuis and just ahead of American Todd Lodwick.

Spillane and Lodwick, both of Steamboat Springs, Colo., took turns leading the way for much of the race.

Spillane looked to have an insurmountable lead as he made his final turn, but Chappuis surged to the front to win the event, which features one jump on the normal hill and a 10-kilometer cross-country race.

When vice presidents collide: Biden and Cheney take up the battle over antiterrorism policies

WASHINGTON (AP) — Pingponging across the airwaves, Vice President Joe Biden and predecessor Dick Cheney bickered Sunday over terror trials and interrogations, credit for success in Iraq and the long-running effort to contain Iran's nuclear program.

Biden called Cheney "misinformed or he is misinforming" on current national security strategies.

Cheney said President Barack Obama wasn't taking the al-Qaida threat seriously. But, in a marked change of tone, the former vice president acknowledged that the Bush White House struggled with how to bring suspected terrorists to justice.

Highly partisan public skirmishes between the Obama White House and Cheney — the result of the former vice president's unusual public criticism on a successor administration — have become standard fare.

And the back-and-forth that was set up in Sunday's sequential appearances of television talk shows did not disappoint.

Biden struck first, declaring that Cheney's attacks on Obama's commitment to fighting terrorism ignored the facts.

"We've eliminated 12 of their top 20 people. We have taken out 100 of their associates," said Biden.

"They are in fact not able to do anything remotely like they were in the past. They are on the run. I don't know where Dick Cheney has been. Look, it's one thing, again, to criticize. It's another thing to sort of rewrite history. What is he talking about?"

CA surf contest reminds bystanders of sea's power

Ukiah woman breaks ankle

By PAUL ELIAS
Associated Press Writer

HALF MOON BAY, Calif. (AP) — The Mavericks Surf Contest was no day at the beach for participants or spectators.

Unexpected waves breaking on shore Saturday swept dozens of spectators from their perches on the manmade jetty at the southern tip of Mavericks beach.

Most escaped with minor injuries but three were hospitalized with broken bones. Others needed plucking from the water. The near tragedy stood as a reminder of how dangerous the sea can be.

According to the San Francisco Chronicle, one wave knocked down Betsy Foreman, 48, of Ukiah, and broke her ankle. She had been part of the way up a hillside with other fans but had come down and was walking away from the water at the urging of San Mateo County sheriff's deputies, according to the Chronicle.

Authorities spent the rest of the day warning the thousands attending the event about the dangers of the ocean. They closed off vast portions of the beach, ushered people from the edges of nearby cliffs and shook their heads at what might have been.

While the debate over spectator safety raged on shore, South African Chris Bertish beat 23 other surfers and carried home the \$50,000 first-place prize.

"It's hard to explain how much water was moving around out there," said Bertish, who spent 36 hours traveling from South Africa to Half Moon Bay. "I took the worst beating of my life out there."

He said he will spend part of the prize money paying back his brother and two friends, who loaned him money to buy his airplane ticket.

Many of the spectators brought their children, pets and coolers with plans to pass a sunny Saturday watching elite surfers compete atop monster waves one-half mile from shore.

"We were very lucky that nobody was swept out to sea," said California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Battalion Chief Scott Jalbert, whose department tended to most of the wounded.

A shaky and wet Pamela Masette left the contest almost immediately after arriving from her Corte Madera home 50 miles away.

"It just came out of nowhere and wiped us all out," she said, showing her bloody left hand and left knee. Her Nikon camera was destroyed. Many other spectators lost cameras, cell phones and backpacks as the waves swept the seawall.

Attendees and some competitors questioned the wisdom of allowing people so close to the waterline when high tides and epic surf were predicted.

"It was stupid," said Grant Washburn, a big-wave veteran and an original Mavericks surfer. "It was totally predictable and anyone who knows the spot knows not to put anything on the jetty."

Keir Beadling, chief executive of the company that manages the event, did not return several telephone and e-mail messages Saturday seeking comment.

Others said that no one could have predicted that several waves would have jumped over the jetty and injured people.

"It's a force of nature that can't be predicted," said the fire chief Jalbert.

The dangerous situation was recognized, but too late. Additional firefighters were on the way to clear the beach when the waves washed over spectators, he said.

Only after the unexpected large waves swept in during high tide did the National Weather Service post a high surf warning until 10 p.m. Saturday.

The agency previously posted a less severe high surf advisory.

The surfing contest offers a \$150,000 purse, making it the most lucrative big-wave contest in the world, even though it

is held only when conditions are prime.

Competitors voted to schedule it because forecasts called for record-breaking waves, despite warnings that strong winds could make those breakers dangerously unpredictable.

Finishing behind Bertish were: Shane Desmond, Santa Cruz, second place; Anthony Tashnick, Santa Cruz; third place; Dave Wessel, Kailua, Hawaii, fourth; Carlos Burle, Brazil, fifth; and Kenny Collins, Santa Cruz, sixth.

The surf in the lineup reached 40-foot faces, and a shore-break of five to six feet washed over the beach and a seawall.

Two surprise waves knocked out barricades, a spectator platform and a large scaffold holding speakers broadcasting the contest, held in this tiny harbor town 25 miles south of San Francisco along Highway 1.

Marsha Poulin, of nearby El Granada, was at the water's edge minutes before the first rogue wave struck.

She said she was concerned that organizers were letting spectators get so close to the ocean, given the conditions.

"Just because they were letting us be here doesn't mean it was safe," said Poulin, who left for higher ground just in time.

Associated Press Writer Don Thompson contributed to this report from Sacramento.

Health

Continued from Page 1

drug and alcohol treatment services.

Anderson Valley Health Center, because it does not receive any federal dollars, is currently the clinic at the highest risk for reduction of hours.

"Maintaining access to these localized areas is so important. We have an aging population here and so many holes in our system."

And because of a relatively stagnant county population with a stable birth rate, no additional federal dollars are allocated, and attracting and keeping an engaged pool of physicians is very difficult, according to Frey. "I am hoping that projects like the Mustard Seed Program can bring together hospitals, private practitioners and clinics to look at what would be our best health care delivery system. There is enough tenaciousness here that we should be able to come up with a way to take care of ourselves."

"Community health centers are a huge footprint in the delivery system of primary care," says Frey. "How do we look at what we have collectively and how do we find a way to sustain those things?"

CORRECTIONS

The Ukiah Daily Journal reserves this space to correct errors or make clarifications to news articles. Significant errors in obituary notices or birth announcements will result in reprinting the entire article. Errors may be reported to the editor, 468-3526.

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DAILY DERBY: 1st: 06 Whirl Win; 2nd: 03 Hot Spot; 3rd: 08 Gorgeous George; Race time: 1:44.40.

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