

# The Carmel Pine Cone

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## City complains about post office, but nobody listens

■ Will Farr be able to help?

By MARY SCHLEY

“PLEASE HELP!” began the March 5 letter city administrator Doug Schmitz sent to Jeffrey Day, U.S. Postal Service manager for the Monterey Bay area. “The City of Carmel-by-the-Sea is the recipient of numerous complaints since the beginning of 2015” about the Fifth Avenue post office, where most residents and businesses have to retrieve their mail.

Those complaints, which Schmitz and Carmel Police Chief Mike Calhoun also outlined in a Jan. 28 meeting with local postmaster Sandra Tamiano, include long waits for service, the messiness of the post office, a transient’s habit of sleeping on the bench in the lobby at night, and the sudden reinstatement of PO box fees for seniors living in the Carmel Foundation’s affordable housing complexes in town.

At the meeting, Tamiano told Schmitz and Calhoun she’d respond to their concerns within a month, Schmitz said. But by early March, they had heard nothing, which prompted Schmitz to send his letter to Day.

That letter brought no reply, either, so he sent another on April 10 updating the district manager. He mentioned a postal customer who was ticketed for overtime parking while

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## Desal plant EIR contains few surprises

By PAUL MILLER

AFTER ALL the years of study and debate, if you thought all the issues surrounding a new water project for the Monterey Peninsula had been pretty well fleshed out, you’d be right — at least according to a vast EIR released Thursday analyzing Cal Am’s plan for a desal plant, underground storage, increased use of reclaimed water and various other facilities.

According to the 1,789-page document — prepared for the California Public Utilities Commission by consulting company Environmental Science Associates — the Cal Am plan will provide the Peninsula with the water it needs while protecting the Carmel River, and will have only a few significant impacts on the environment.

While local community leaders had only just begun reading the EIR and weren’t able to comment on it for this story, Carmel Mayor Jason Burnett, who has been active in the mayor’s group analyzing various water-supply proposals, had read a summary of the study and said, “I don’t see any issues that we have not anticipated and planned for.”

### Supplying water, mitigating impacts

The document, which can be downloaded at [www.cpuc.ca.gov/Environment/info/esa/mpwsp/index.html](http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/Environment/info/esa/mpwsp/index.html), says the Monterey Peninsula needs a long-term water supply of 15,296 acre-feet of water per year (approximately 5 billion gallons) — enough to keep taps flowing for existing residents, provide for development of lots of record and for a small amount of new growth approved by the cities or the county, and ensure the economic viability of the local hospi-

tality industry, while also protecting the environment.

If the new project proposed by Cal Am comes to fruition, the EIR says, 3,376 acre-feet per year of the needed water

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PHOTO/COURTESY CAL AM

A test well in the Marina dunes is in full operation and will produce results that will determine whether the site is suitable for a full-scale desal plant, according to an EIR released this week.

## Frustration highlights problems with event permits

By MARY SCHLEY

CHAMBER CEO Monta Potter’s list of complaints from people who want to hold events in town, or even just get married on the beach, is long.

A corporate dinner relocated to Napa because the event wasn’t “welcomed by the City of Carmel,” she said, a beach wedding with just four people was told it needed a permit that would cost \$750, and even the Monterey County Film Commission complained about having trouble getting a permit for a commercial to be shot in Carmel.

Those concerns, expressed at the April 14 meeting of the community activities and cultural commission, along with the decision of the P.G. Auto Rally to drop Carmel from its route rather than pay \$12,386.65, have brought the attention of Mayor Jason Burnett, who is forming a committee to tackle the problems.

“We definitely do have an issue — our policy is not working the way it should, and our implementation of the policy is not working the way it should,” he said. “We have different documents that are sometimes conflicting, and the public’s confused, organizers are confused, our staff are trying to

work through those conflicting documents, and it’s not fair to any of them.”

The goal, he said, should be to have predictable, fair fees that adequately compensate the city for the resources it uses on events while not over burdening the organizers.

And the approval of the events themselves should follow some standard criteria, not whether the city council likes them or not.

Decision makers have long struggled over the issue of how much to charge groups wanting to host events, whether a private dinner on the beach, or a daylong auto event necessitating shutting down more than a dozen downtown blocks. In addition to rules on public events drafted in the 1980s and ’90s, the council developed a fee schedule in 2011, as well as a policy for waiving some of those fees in 2014.

But carrying them out has been anything but smooth. During her comments at last month’s community activities and cultural commission meeting, Potter also said she’d heard from a caterer who lost a beach event because the rules have changed, the Carmel Art Festival had to give up its

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## Pebble Beach housing EIR ready for comment

By MARY SCHLEY

WHILE MOST environmental effects of building the Pebble Beach Co.’s proposed 24-unit affordable-housing project on 2.7 acres near S.F.B. Morse Drive and Ortega Road could be reduced to less than significant levels with mitigation, impacts on transportation and water supply “would be significant and unavoidable,” according to the first draft of the environmental report released Thursday. The county is seeking written comments “on the accuracy and adequacy” of the study, as well as other relevant information regarding potential effects on the environment.

The plans call for two-story units in four buildings, as well as a manager’s office, 67 parking spaces, driveways and landscaping, with almost 80 percent of the 13-acre area maintained as open space in order to protect its Monterey

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## 277 square miles on a table top

There’s an impressive new exhibit at the Carmel Valley History Center, where visitors can now get a bird’s-eye view of the local topography — thanks to an elaborate 3-D terrain model. Produced at a cost of \$12,000, the model packs 277 square miles of mountains, rivers, canyons, creeks and valleys into a space 24 inches wide and 72 inches long. Three local donors put up \$9,000, while the history center contributed \$3,000 toward the price tag of the model. Pictured with the model are Jeff Ohlson (left) and Kim Williams of the historical society.



## Supes reject general plan settlement offer

By CHRIS COUNTS

LIKELY SETTING the stage for litigation that could prove to be expensive for taxpayers, the Monterey County Board of Supervisors voted 4-1 April 28 to reject amendments environmentalists want made to the county’s new general plan — although they delayed making a final decision for two weeks to allow for more negotiations.

The proposed amendments, which were endorsed by the county counsel, are intended to settle lawsuits filed five years ago by LandWatch Monterey County and the Open Monterey Project. The lawsuits argued that the general plan relied on faulty water studies and would permit too much development, especially along the county’s “wine corridor,” without adequate environmental review.

But opponents of the changes are pushing back — and it was clear from this week’s hearing that supervisors are listening to them.

Those opponents of changes sought by environmentalists, including

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