



# GRIDLEY *Showcase*

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GRIDLEY HOMETOWN NEWS

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# Gridley history rich, varied



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**By David Vantress**

*Correspondent*

Most small towns in California are proud of their history.

Gridley is no different, and as the community continues to grow and adapt to an exciting future, it acknowledges its storied past.

The city of Gridley will celebrate its 115th anniversary in 2020. It was incorporated Nov. 23, 1905.

Farming and agriculture have always been a big part of Gridley's past and present, and can be expected to remain part of the city's future.

The city is named for its founder, George Gridley, a prosperous sheep rancher and one of the city's earliest landowners.

"Silk Stocking Row," the many well-preserved turn-of-the-century homes on Hazel Street, was so named because during the Depression the only women who could afford silk stockings lived in these homes.

Railroad construction led to the creation and growth of many small communities, and that applied to Gridley, as well. The Central Pacific Railroad laid tracks from Oregon to Chico in 1865.

The railroad finished its path to Gridley in 1870, contributing greatly to the new Northern California community. The principal products from the Gridley area were wool and sheep.

Orchards, field crops, and cattle soon followed.

In 1896, the Libby, McNeil & Libby Cannery was established and became one of the largest peach canning opera-

tions in the world. The first home and store in Gridley were built by L.C. Stone in 1874.

Stone served as postmaster, the train depot and express agent, as well as a merchant. Wells Fargo & Co. opened its office in 1871 and soon other businesses came to the burgeoning new community.

In the early 1900s, Gridley became a destination community for members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

Mormons began emigrating from the Rexburg, Idaho area to Gridley in November 1906, in response to a state of California advertising campaign.

By February of the following year the Gridley branch of the church was organized and more Latter-day Saints continued coming to Gridley from Idaho, Nevada, Utah and other states, effectively the turning the small but growing farming community into a Mormon enclave, according to Richard Cowan's 1996 book, "California Saints: A 150-year legacy in the Golden State.

By the end of 1908 there were some 500 LDS settlers in the Gridley area. The LDS church's first chapel was constructed on the west corner of Sycamore and Vermont Streets in 1912 with a seating capacity of 1,000.

It was the largest LDS meetinghouse west of Salt Lake City at that time.

Today, Gridley proudly advertises itself as "The Small Town That Loves Company," and the community will get a big chance to prove it this spring and summer as the Gridley Camp Fire Community brings more than 1,000 Camp Fire survivors to the city for temporary housing.

**GRIDLEY**  
HOMETOWN NEWS

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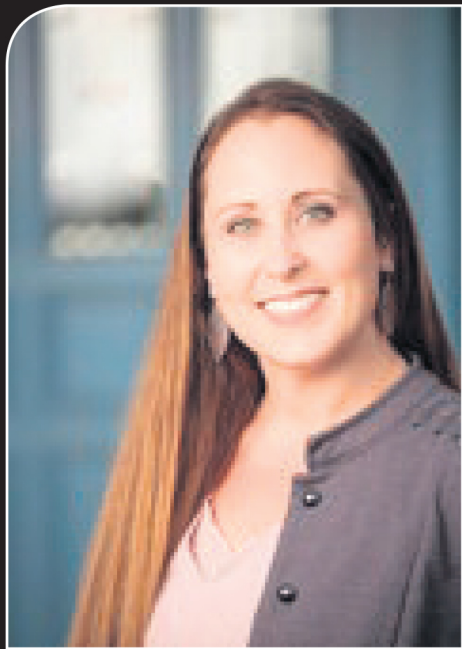
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Farming is one of the main things that has kept Gridley alive over its long and rich history.



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# Orchard Hospital a vital part of Gridley community

By David Vantress  
Correspondent



GRIDLEY HOMETOWN NEWS PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Gridley's Orchard Hospital dates back to 1949 and is a big part of the Gridley community.

a \$17,000 federal grant helped buy hospital equipment.

The small community hospital started with 30 beds and has grown slowly over the years. It was rebranded as Orchard Hospital in 2013, and also

operates the Medical Specialty Center at 284 Spruce Street.

Orchard Hospital staff describes their facility as "A place where employees, volunteers and physicians collaborate to create an environment of com-

passion, humanity and care for the community we serve."

A new hospital will soon be constructed, as a planned new ER project has been expanded to include just building an entirely new hospital.

Any small community needs a strong healthcare presence.

Gridley has just that in Orchard Hospital.

The 45-bed facility is celebrating its 70th birthday in 2019. And its leadership and staff are planning on being around for at least another 70 years!

Orchard Hospital traces its roots back to 1949, when a pledge drive led to the establishment of what was then called "Biggs-Gridley Memorial Hospital."

The pledge drive focused on the Butte County communities of Gridley, Biggs and Richvale and the Sutter County community of Live Oak. The goal at the time was to provide closer-to-home health care for the small communities.

The fund drive raised \$700,000, and

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# Gridley Chamber honors survivors with Red Suspenders theme “Butte Strong”

When it came time for the Gridley Area Chamber of Commerce board to name their theme for the May 18, 2019 Red Suspenders Day celebration it was unanimous that with all that has happened since the November 8, 2018 Camp Fire the survivors and first responders needed to be recognized.

Red t-shirts with this logo are available at the Chamber Office or the Distribution Center across the street for just \$15.

People have chosen to move to Gridley either to rent or buy homes and have commented while visiting the Distribution Center that they have been graciously welcomed and like the town.

Survivors will be included in the 11

a.m., parade and invited to participate by joining the line-up at the south end of Virginia Street by 10:30 a.m., on Saturday.

On Friday morning, the celebration will begin with the annual Unjustice Court at Rotary Park with Justice of the Peace duties performed by Gridley-Biggs Police Chief Allan Byers. This is a great way to catch up with friends, enjoy some pizza for lunch and support the Chamber so either bring your wallet or have friends ready to bail you out. Friday night = will bring the annual Guns ‘N Hoses sponsored by Gridley-Biggs Police and Fire at Vierra Park starting at 6 p.m.

Saturday’s events start early with the

Little League and Knights of Columbus Pancake Breakfast at Railroad Park at 7 a.m. Vendors will be busy setting up at this time on Hazel Street between Railroad and Quota Parks along with Daddow Park as the shopping begins at 8 a.m. Entertainment includes a rock wall and a pinewood derby competition in Daddow Park following the parade sponsored by the Cub Scouts bringing in competitors from Butte and Glenn Counties. The Hillcrest Avenue Band will perform at Daddow Park starting after the parade at 12:30 and the ever-popular Fireman’s Games will begin at 1 p.m., at Rotary Park. Speaking of Rotary Park, be sure to visit there for all the many activities for kids.

A car show will be on Kentucky Street with many beautiful classic cars

on display.

To cap off the two days of activities, the Gridley Museum will host their 5th Annual Tri Tip Dinner, made possible by service organizations FOCUS, AAUW, Gridley Rotary and Lions, Quota Club and Knights of Columbus. Tickets will be just \$20 and available at the museum Tuesday - Friday 10 a.m., to 2 p.m. There will be plenty of seating along with drive-up dinners available.

Many vendors have already signed up for this great event in it’s 58th year and there is still time to sign up as a vendor or for the parade by visiting the Chamber office at 890 Hazel Street. Call 846-3142 for more information.

The Chamber’s Farmers Market will begin June 4 from 5:30 p.m., to 8 p.m., each Tuesday until August 20.



PHOTO PROVIDED

**T-SHIRTS AVAILABLE FOR RED SUSPENDERS DAY CELEBRATION** - The 58th Annual Red Suspenders Day Celebration will be held Saturday, May 18 and souvenir t-shirts commemorating this years “Butte Strong” theme are available by calling Sylvia at A+ Custom Vinyl, 530-565-8528. The cost is \$15 and t-shirts can be picked up at the Chamber office after ordering. Gridley-Biggs Police and Gridley Fire Department are helping the Chamber of Commerce board with the planning of this great event. The pancake breakfast will start at 7 a.m., bed races at 10 a.m., and parade at 11 a.m., followed by Firemen’s games, two pinewood derbies, music by Hillcrest Avenue and loads of vendors with many different food choices. The Gridley Museum Tri-Tip Dinner will be from 4 to 7 p.m., in front of the museum with drive-up available for just \$20 per ticket. Tickets available at the museum or from any board member.

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# Gridley Fire Department strives to protect community

**By David Vantress**  
*Correspondent*

Small towns depend greatly on their fire department.

That's also the case in Gridley, where the city contracts with CAL FIRE for the majority of fire services and also maintains a volunteer department.

"We protect Gridley from fire and other threats to life safety. We envision a community free of threat from fire or risk to life safety. We value compassion, loyalty, integrity,

and Gridley, the community we protect," the department says on its page on the City of Gridley website.

The Gridley Fire Department provides a number of services, including fire, rescue, emergency medical, public service, and hazardous materials emergency response service for the City of Gridley.

This includes fire prevention, pre-fire planning, emergency preparedness, firefighting, fire investigation, and code enforcement.

The Gridley Fire Department operates two components, a career staff funded jointly by the City and County, responsible for day-to-day operations and staffed by CAL FIRE personnel; and a volunteer company providing additional depth of personnel.

The volunteer component of the Gridley Fire Department City of Gridley is a combination Fire Department with full-time CAL FIRE Firefighters and Gridley area citizen Volunteer Firefighters.

Volunteers meet regu-

larly for training, according to the department's website. Training is done cooperatively with Butte County Fire and includes all basic firefighting skills: first aid, ladders, breathing apparatus use, hose streams, vehicle extrication, etc.

This ongoing training is in addition to the initial basic operations training course.

For more information about becoming a Gridley Volunteer Firefighter, visit [www.joinbcfd.org](http://www.joinbcfd.org) and submit a Volunteer Firefighter Interest Form.



PHOTO BY LYNNE SPENCER

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The Gridley Fire Department's main fire station on East Gridley Road is pictured.



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# Gridley schools part of community's charm

**By David Vantress**  
*Correspondent*

The high school offers five CTE (Career Technology Education) academies: Agricultural Manufacturing, Animal Science, Horticultural Science, Arts, Media, and Entertainment, and a Health Sciences Academy with Orchard Hospital.

Esperanza High School, a continuation high school program, serves 25 students with two teachers. The GUSD also offers an independent study program.

Sycamore Middle School, the district's only middle school, has an enrollment of about 480. The school serves grades 6-8 and employs 22 teachers.

The district has two elementary schools: McKinley and Wilson. McKinley is for kindergarten and first grade. It has an enrollment of 320. Wilson takes in grades 2-5. With 580 students, it's the second biggest school in the Gridley district.

Most small towns are proud of their school system and consider it a jewel.

That's certainly the case in Gridley, where the Gridley Unified School District and Manzanita School are both shining examples of educational excellence.

Manzanita School, located at 627 E. Evans Reimer Road, has students from grades K-8. It feeds into Gridley High School. It has an enrollment of just under 300 and employs 14 teachers, along with a GATE specialist and a music specialist.

Gridley High School, meanwhile, is the biggest school in the Gridley school district, with an enrollment of about 600. It employs 32 teachers and two counselors.



GRIDLEY HOMETOWN NEWS PHOTO BY DAVID VANTRESS

**Former Gridley High School three-sport athlete Lauren Erickson graduated in 2018. Excellent athletic programs are just one key component of an excellent Gridley school system.**

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# Camp Fire Distribution Center part of Gridley's hometown spirit

**By David Vantress**  
*Correspondent*

One of the things Gridley residents take the most pride in about their small community is its spirit.

"The Small Town That Loves Company," is Gridley's motto.

It could just as well be "The Small Town That Likes To Help."

That helping spirit has been on display in a big way these past few months in the wake of the Camp Fire, which devastated the Butte County communities of Paradise and Magalia.

The city of Gridley is getting ready to welcome the Camp Fire Community, which will bring more than a thousand Camp Fire survivors to the area for as long as two years.

But from the early days of the Camp Fire tragedy, Gridley stepped up in a big way to help, with residents collecting clothing, food, and other items for fire survivors.

Dozens of Camp Fire survivors stream into the large space inside the Ag-Data building each Tuesday and Thursday to get clothes, personal items, and numerous other needs met. As many as 35 survivors have come to the center on any given day.

Gridley residents have stepped forward in a big way to help out, according to Lynne Spencer, president of the Gridley Area Chamber of Commerce, who works at the center several days a week.

The distribution center is expected to be available through Memorial Day weekend. It's open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 5-7 p.m. on Tuesdays and 1-4 p.m. on Thursdays.

And now, Camp Fire survivors can get their spiritual and mental health needs met as well.

Episcopal Team member Mary Boeger has stepped forward to start a pastoral and emotional wellness ministry at the Gridley distribution center.

Counseling is available Tuesday nights from 5-7 p.m. Appointments are available, or Camp Fire survivors can drop in. For more information on the counseling, call 530-218-3125.

As with other Camp Fire relief efforts, survivors need to bring photo ID and proof of being a Camp Fire survivor.



GRIDLEY HOMETOWN NEWS PHOTO BY DAVID VANTRESS

Gridley Chamber of Commerce President Lynne Spencer moves among the donated goods at the Gridley Camp Fire Distribution Center on a recent Tuesday morning.



GRIDLEY HOMETOWN NEWS PHOTO BY DAVID VANTRESS

Numerous food, personal and clothing items are available at the distribution center for Camp Fire survivors.

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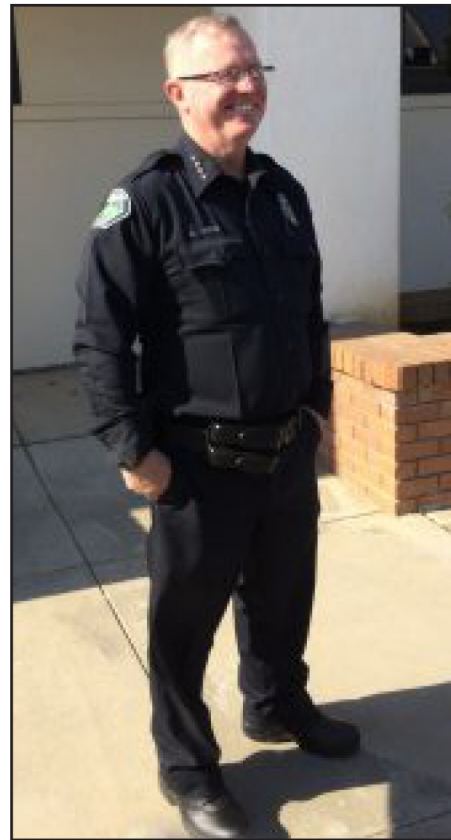
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# Gridley-Biggs Police Department

**By David Vantress**  
*Correspondent*



GRIDLEY HOMETOWN NEWS PHOTO BY DAVID VANTRESS

**Gridley-Biggs Police Chief Allen Byers talks with a citizen during an event last fall.**

Courage, Compassion and Commitment is the motto of the Gridley-Biggs Police Department.

The department provides a number of services to the community. As far as police services, according to its page on the City of Gridley website, the Gridley-Biggs Police Department is responsible for the protection of life and property, the maintenance of order, the control and prevention of crime, and the enforcement of motor vehicle laws and regulations.

Some of the primary activities related to these responsibilities include enforcement of the laws of the state and the City; investigation of crimes; apprehension of criminals, and maintenance of a crime prevention program. The Police Department contracts police and animal control services for our neighbor, the City of Biggs, to provide them with the same services enjoyed by the residents of Gridley.

The Gridley-Biggs Police Department receives approximately 3,000 911 calls per year and 16,000 calls for service, according to statistics provided on the city's website.

In the area of patrol services, Gridley-Biggs police officers respond to and investigate emergency in-progress calls, provide necessary assistance to other law enforcement agencies during emergency and critical situations.

Officers investigate state-mandated calls for service such as missing persons, elder and child abuse, sexual assaults, domestic violence and death investigations. Non-emergency calls such as burglaries, thefts, disturbances, traffic collisions, etc. are also investigated.

In addition, officers analyze fingerprints and other physical evidence, maintain court evidence, process and destroy contraband evidence monitor activities of individuals on probation and parole, provide legal update training, and conduct major investigations with crimes requiring out-of-town follow-up information to the public.

Community support and outreach is a big part of what any police depart-

ment does, and the Gridley-Biggs Police Department has a number of projects that help it perform that mission.

For one, the department provides bicycle registration and bicycle safety presentations.

The Department also provides "Dont Text and Drive" presentations and holiday and event safety programs in the Gridley and Biggs communities.

In addition, the department partners with the Gridley Lions Club for graffiti abatement in the area. The department is involved with the coordination of Police Services during the Butte County Fair each August.

"We support the Butte County Safe Kids (BCSK) Program and participate in many other Child Safety Programs, such as, bike helmet give-aways, child safety seat inspections and 911 safety training at the local schools," the department says on its City of Gridley website page.

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