

February/March 2021

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*Life on  
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# Paradise

PARADISE POST 





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# Paradise honored on the Mars Rover

By Richard Silva  
[rsilva@paradisepost.com](mailto:rsilva@paradisepost.com)

When the Mars Rover landed in late February it carried two chips on the rover that read "Paradise Strong" and "Paradise, California."

NASA's Jerry Stoces presented the town council with a plaque last year that Paradise was being honored on the Mars Rover.

While Stoces was in town he, along with Town Councilwoman Melissa Schuster, and a host of Star Wars characters toured Ridge schools to tell the students about the Rover which is named "Perseverance."

It launched from Kennedy Space Center on July 17 and landed Feb. 18, 2021 and was a 150 million mile trip.

Stoces said that the mission is to find sub-surface water which they believe is there because they've found evidence of frost.

The idea to tour schools in Paradise came out of a conversation that Schuster and Stoces had in 2019 after she said that e-mailed her asking about naming the chips.

Shuster loved the idea and on Wednesday they toured schools including Paradise Junior-Senior High School before ending the day in Chico at Achieve Charter school.

Jerry Stoces, of NASA, and a Star Wars character brings in gifts from the Peter Mayhew Foundation to Paradise Junior-Senior High on Wednesday.

At every stop, Stoces told the students about the rover and played a video. After that, he told them that the Peter Mayhew Foundation and NASA had donated toys to each school. Mayhew was the actor who played Chewbacca in the Star Wars series.







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# Joy Lyn's reopening another sign that Paradise is rebuilding



By Richard Silva  
[rsilva@paradisepost.com](mailto:rsilva@paradisepost.com)

Joy Lyn's Candies was set to open at 10 a.m. when it opened in October, but the line started as early as 9 a.m. and forced the business to open earlier than anticipated.

"Today is super exciting, it's been a long time for us," owner Glenn Hartley said. "It's like the first day of school. You're all dressed up, you get to see all your old friends, get to see your new friends. It's unbelievable."

Hartley said that the first customers started coming in at 9 a.m. despite the store opening time set an hour later. The local staple's reopening was another

sign that Paradise is rebuilding from the devastating 2018 Camp Fire.

"It's what the town needed, some normalcy," he said, adding that Debbie's restaurant opening is also a good indication of the town's recovery. "A lot of us have grown up going to Debbie's for breakfast and getting a Joy Lyn's Easter Basket for Easter. It's just part of growing up in Paradise."

The store was bustling all morning with residents from all over to pick up their favorite chocolate treat.

"It's absolutely amazing to see this," Hartley said. "I didn't want to call it the grand opening because we're still waiting on cabinets; there's a shop to be finished out. I didn't want to push the opening back again. I didn't

want to do that to people again."

The store's location at Pearson some Road right across the street from the park is perfect for the town's new vision, Paradise Chamber of Commerce President Mark Thorp said.

"It's centrally located near the Community Park, which is the proposed center of the town," he said. "This is kind of the anchor -- setting this in place and then starting to look at the hardened structures that they're proposing, is sort of pushing all towards the park."

And it wasn't just regular customers that were dropping in, other local business owners who have returned to the Ridge went to the store.

Vince and Christina Clarkson, who own Hudson's Appliance

right up the street from Joy Lyn's, stopped by to pick up some treats.

Bill Hartley was back at making chocolate goodies for customers on Thursday.

"It's just the community coming back together, Joy Lyn's had a good footprint in Paradise," Christina said. "People knew who Joy Lyn's was -- just seeing them come back is good for the community feel."

Vince said they were watching the store progress to its opening.

"She loves the chocolate covered Oreos," Vince said of his wife. "Driving by it every day, we just couldn't wait and I know that they have some hurdles to get through so it's good to see them open."



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# Road Roasters Coffee Company



Scot and Christine Steenson

By Richard Silva  
[rsilva@paradisepost.com](mailto:rsilva@paradisepost.com)

If there's one thing Camp Fire victims have learned the past two years, it's to be adaptable. Scot and Christine Steenson are a great example.

The couple and their two children lost their home on Neal Road in the devastating fire. And after the fire, the couple decided to chase Christine's dream of running a coffee shop.

That dream has turned into Road Roasters Coffee Company. Currently, the company is being run out of their garage in Forest Ranch but the couple says they will be open-

ing a shop in Paradise.

After the fire, the family relocated to Red Bluff, and Christine was transporting the children to their schools in Butte County -- one in Durham, the other in Chico. That forced her to quit her job because the fire decimated their support system. While Scott had just started a new job days before the fire hit, that job kept him on the road often.

The couple eventually found a new home in Forest Ranch, which made the ability to transport the children to school easier, but in an odd way also led to a March 2019 phone call that would give birth to their local coffee com-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11



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# Road Roasters Coffee Company

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

pany.

Scot was in Anaheim and couldn't sleep as he was worried about a tree hanging over the new home in Forest Ranch.

"It was 2 a.m. and it was 'Babe wake up, you know that dream you had,' he said. 'Let's do that.'"

After the fire, Scot was done with being on the road and it was time to be closer to the family.

"It was just everyone's state of mind and where we were at the time," Christine said. "Everything just kind of came to a head."

They started the business in April 2019 but didn't start selling their coffee until August of that year. The company started small to learn the coffee business and to perfect the process of making and cut down on waste. They buy coffee from Haiti, Dominican Republic, Kenya and Colombia, among others.

They have a roaster that makes two pounds at a time, but production will be ramped up to 10 pounds when a roaster is set up at their new location in Paradise.

For the Steensons, the company has four pillars-- com-

munity, charity, coffee and fun.

"We try to be community focused, but we also want to be charity focused," he said. "Let's focus on that now so that will carry us throughout our business."

One way they do that is with the sale of every bag of Kick Ash, \$1 is donated to a Paradise charity. They currently work with Minis for a Cause, Burkett's Automotive Road Program, Butte Humane Society and Vectors Veterans Housing.

While they primarily sell through the internet and deliver to businesses and residences, they have found being mobile is more rewarding than an actual coffee shop. Christine has now adapted her dream to what they do now: selling the bagged coffee at the Wednesday Farmers Market in Chico, the Tuesday Farmers Market in Paradise and Saturday's Farmers Market in Chico and Oroville. They also sell it at Zavatarro's Market in Forest Ranch.

The couple says that doing not only allows them to tell their story, but more importantly hear their customers' stories.

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# PARADISE GOLD NUGGET DAYS

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Activity begins on the evening of Friday, April 23, 2021, with the GND's Queen Contest. This event will be closed to the public due to state Covid protocols, but a new Queen will be crowned and candidates from 2019 will be honored and acknowledged for our 2021-22 season.

Beginning Saturday morning (Time to follow), Pair-O-Dice Chapter, E Clampus Vitus will "BRING THE DONKEYS BACK" with fanfare and celebration associated with the transport of the world famous 54 lb nugget from the Willard Mine.

At 9:00am, the Paradise Gem and Mineral Club will feature their annual gem and mineral show at 475 Pearson Road, with lots of activities including: Kids zone, raffles and silent auction, a food truck, and so much more.

At noon, our community returns to celebration with the Gold Nugget Parade through town (through Old Magalia).

In conclusion of this year's Gold Nugget Days festival, our very own Paradise Horseman's Association will be celebrating with an equestrian event on Sunday (Time to follow), April 25th utilizing the equestrian park on Moore Road.



For more information, or specific requests, please contact us directly.

Mark Thorp  
Gold Nugget Days, Inc.  
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After the devastating fire in Paradise, November 2018. Paradise Gem & Mineral Club proudly announces that we have regrouped and have a new Clubhouse in a building that we have partnered with Gold Nugget Museum.

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# Time is now for sewer in Paradise

By Richard Silva  
*rsilva@paradisepost.com*

It's now or never.

That's been the message from Paradise town engineer Marc Mattox as it relates to building a sewer within the town limits.

And so far momentum towards that occurrence has never been farther along than it right now. So far the Paradise Town Council has voted to move forward on an environmental impact report on the potential of building a sewer pipe to Chico's water treatment plant.

In January approved a co-operative work agreement with the city of Chico on building a pipe to Chico's Water Pollution Control Plant. That agreement, Town Engineer Marc Mattox told the council includes \$300,000 to Chico to undertake a specific scope of work as a vendor to the town of Paradise.

In February, the Chico City Council agreed to take part in the EIR.

The plan includes creation of a Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control board-led committee that participates in the Paradise Sewer Project development.

Paradise will be represented by Mayor Steve Crowder and Vice Mayor Jody Jones while Chico will be represented by Mayor Andrew Coolidge and Vice Mayor



Kasey Pulliam-Reynolds.

The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board support for the project has made the town more comfortable with the Chico option. The state is trying to keep the town on a path that has funding at the end of it that gets the estimated \$182 million project built, Mattox said. Locally he said that Paradise would not be able to build a plant with 300 standing structures within the sewer area.

While it's true that there were some political issues surrounding the issue as it relates to Chico, the biggest issue may have been the cost to Chico.

"Imagine if the tables were flipped and our community would react if somebody came to us and asked us to spend our own money to study and help them at our cost without a real plan or commitment," Mattox said. "I think that's plagued in the past couple of years and goes arounds."

He added that it looked like Paradise was looking for



help and expecting Chico to pay for it. This time, however, grant funding is being used to pay for the EIR and some of that money is being set aside for Chico to hire their own consultant and pay for their staff to help Chico study what it needs to help Paradise.

Mattox said, along with the grant, the state -- in the form of Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control -- is acting as sort of an intermediary between the two government agencies to get the desired result of a regional water treatment plant solution to Paradise sewer.

With the knowledge that Paradise can't build it on its own and Chico's portion of the study funded by the state, Mattox said everyone has a fresh perspective on the project.

All that means to Mattox is now is the time to move on the sewer.

"If it's not now -- it's never," he said. "It has to be now for sewer for Paradise," Mattox said.

He added the restrictions

will only get worse and that the idea that residents buy and combine lots for dispersal is not sustainable.

"We have to be able to support restaurants and multi-family housing to recover fully -- or at all," he said.

Additionally, town manager Kevin Philips says what they're trying to do is strip the politics from the idea and do what's right for both communities.

"We're trying to get to an understanding that this is a regional project to support both communities," Philips said. "Each community is going to pay their own way and it will be beneficial to both communities. This is not a political project but beneficial projects."

Phillips said that this EIR will be interactive and they invite those who may oppose it early on in order to get their input and address concern. One of those may be growth, but Mattox views it differently.

"Pre-fire we were talking about growth inducing because restaurants and hair salons can have more than two seats," Mattox said. "Post-fire after experiencing an 83 percent population loss, how could a project designed to get us back to that be growth inducing? It's recovery inducing and its closed pipe from Paradise to Chico's plant."



# Anne Stearns earns Curry 8 Golden Flow Award

By Richard Silva  
[rsilva@paradisepost.com](mailto:rsilva@paradisepost.com)

PARADISE — Paradise High School Athletic Director Anne Stearns has had a challenging time since she took over the job in August 2018. But every so often Stearns gets recognized for her efforts. In 2019, she was named Chico Sportsperson of the Year by the Chico Enterprise-Record.

Late last year, Stearns was honored by NBA star Stephen Curry and the Positive Coaching Alliance with the Curry 8 Golden Flow Award.

Stearns was just one of eight recipients of the award that included basketball shoes covered in 24 karat gold — she was the only athletic director to win one of them.

She said that she got the news from Under Armour right before the winter break and didn't really know what it meant, but because she was focused on school prior to the break she didn't look into it much — not even web search.

But then she started to look into it.

"I was so overwhelmed by being nominated and then getting the award," she said. "I couldn't even imagine who nominated me."

She said that turned out to be Under Armour's Stacy Ulrich whose job was dealing with catastrophic events.

Stearns said that the two really connected during the post-fire.

Stearns said what the award recipients would receive was kept under wraps for "a really long time."

All she knew was that they were to video their reactions to



Anne Stearns

what they had received which Stearns' son did.

"I was awestruck," she said. "They are beautiful, 24-carat gold basketball shoes."

She also received \$1,000 to support the Paradise high school volleyball program.

"It's one of those things where you always think you are doing things for the greater good," she said. "So when you get recognized for doing what I consider to be my job, I am excited for it, and I am humbled by it."

But she said that it's hard to

accept the award at this time.

"I just want to get the kids back on the field and back on the court," she said. "So it is hard to take something like this because I feel like I am not doing my job."

Right now that job is focused on getting athletes eligible to play so when it's time to start, they can play. That's something they have never been as committed to as they are right now.

"I think that is fantastic," she said. "But I still want to see that basketball game, or football game, or volleyball game."

But for Stearns, since Nov. 8, 2018, her job has been in constant crisis mode. The 2018-19 sports calendar was impacted by the fire and 2019-20 and 2020-21 have been impacted by COVID-19.

She knew that the job would be tough when she started in August 2018.

"It's never stopped," she said. "It's strange to me that it's only been two and a half years in. But to come into a situation where you are always in crisis because of COVID — and now this extra COVID part."

She notes that people talk about getting back to normal, but she isn't sure what that is.

"It's crazy to me to think of normalcy and that I don't know what normalcy is," she said. "I don't know what's normal."

She joked that when normal does return, it will be boring.

"Is it me? Am I this really bad omen, do they not want me to be athletic director? Is that why all of the awful things keep happening?" she said. "Maybe I should just quit so everyone can go back to normal."

Jokes aside, she does hope that high school athletics can get back to normal.

"I am excited about that because you put so much effort into all of these things that are going wrong, fixing problems and in constant crisis," Stearns said. "So for me I am excited to have normalcy maybe in a couple of years where I can give back to my coaches and athletes, all of my focus."



# Tractor Supply good anchor for the community

By Richard Silva  
rsilva@paradisepost.com

When Tractor Supply opened in Paradise in late October manager Dannielle Develey says that the new Tractor Supply on Clark Road is off to a good start -- and even though it was a soft opening, "It's been incredible," she said. "It was crazy, we killed it. I had no idea that we would do what we did yesterday."

The new business hopes to help meet the demand in Paradise for those who are rebuilding.

The store offers animal feed, pet food and supplies, propane, fencing, garden supplies, clothing and other home supplies. The company offers a Buy Online, Pickup

In-Store option to purchase products online and pick up their items in the store, or through contactless curbside pickup.

The store also offers an exclusive shopping hour for high-risk customers and seniors 60 and older every Wednesday from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m.

"I feel like we're a good anchor for the community," Develey said. "They are so excited to have us up here, I am grateful to be a part of this."

Develey said she comes from the Grass Valley Tractor Supply store and had never been to Paradise prior to getting the job.

"I got a promotion to a store manager and she asked me if I wanted to come to Paradise," Develey said. "I am all about second chances myself, so just to



be part of this has just been an honor."

Once she got the new job she made her way to Paradise.

"The community has been great, so excited to have us," she said. "They have been so friendly and so happy, it's been wonderful."

The store has a total of 14 employees, Develey said.

"I made sure to hire everybody from Paradise," she said. "I do

have a couple of transfers from other stores. Two from the Chico store and one from the Oroville store."

Having those transfers helps Develey with the training of the new store's employees.

The weekend business gives Develey and her crew a good idea of what next Saturday's grand opening might look like. That opening she said will include a radio remote and the store is giving away "free stuff."

The new store is located next to the old Kmart store at 6600 Clark Rd. It will be open with adjusted hours from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. beginning Nov. 2.

That Shopping center also includes Paradise Fitness, Mountain Mike's Pizza and Save Mart.



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# Paradise Unified School District facilities update



By Richard Silva  
[rsilva@paradisepost.com](mailto:rsilva@paradisepost.com)

The Paradise Unified School District is in the midst of a \$135 million master facilities update.

The two-phased update includes the renovation of Paradise High School, the construction of Ridgeview High School right across from senior/junior high school on Maxwell Drive.

It also includes improvements to Cedarwood

Elementary, Pine Ridge School, Ponderosa Elementary, and at the Paradise Intermediate School, which is currently the Paradise Ridge Elementary school site.

In fact, the Ponderosa Elementary improvements will allow for the relocation of Paradise Ridge Elementary school to that site with the construction there expected to be done by mid-July.

That will mean Paradise Intermediate School students will then move back to Paradise Intermediate School

site on Recreation Dr.

The facilities update also includes a brand new maintenance and operation site on Pearson Road, rebuilding on where the old one was.

It also leaves the Ridgeview school site in old Magalia for potential use for stem labs.

The Cedarwood site would be improved.

The master plan would be carried out in two phases. The first phase would be financed through insurance proceeds from the Camp Fire and is expected to be com-

pleted by the Fall of 2023.

That phase is expected to cost almost \$65.5 million with an expected insurance proceeds revenue of \$66.9 million. But Whitmore said in April that it is possible that insurance proceeds be as high as \$71 million.

The second phase of the master plan is expected to cost almost \$71 million. That is to be funded through Bond development and sale of surplus sites. The plan projects about \$61 million in bond measure funds to the district, the sale of the 63-acre  
*CONTINUED ON PAGE 20*





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# Paradise Unified School District



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

high school site bought with the first bond money sale of the Pearson center surplus, and about \$4.2 million in Proposition 51 money from the high school gym.

Whitmore also noted that PUSD may see between five and \$10 million in revenues from the bond voters passed on Nov. 6, this fall.

There is no projected start and end date for phase two because it is dependent on money from the bond voters passed just two days before the Camp Fire.

They also project to have nearly \$303,000 leftover when

the entire project is finished.

## Paradise High School/ Ridgeview High school

This project will start sometime in fall 2021. Part of that has already started, with the renovation of the tennis courts as part of a new gym construction. The school also spent \$93,938 track repair at Om Wraith has been completed.

Phase one of this project will be broken up in two parts, A and B, and is projected to cost about \$38.8 million.

Part A of the project includes the new gym, new paint on permanent facili-

ties (\$155,473), softball field repair (\$1.5 million), new tennis courts (\$569,000) with new parking (\$828,900) all are set to be completed by fall. Also in part A is repairing the septic system (\$253,024).

All of those are in the midst of construction now.

Part A also calls for the construction of the Ridgeview High School with parking. That project will cost an estimated \$4.48 million and will start later this year and finish by the fall of 2022.

The high school upgrades may also begin this month. The district will modernize

the existing Learning Resource Center, the Student Union with Food Service, costing about \$1.97 million, while they will demo the old food service/classrooms.

They will spend \$450,000 on a new outdoor lunch shelter, modernize the old gym (\$1.3 million), add a weight room and wrestling to it. They will also modernize the library, which along with the old gym.

Also in part A is the \$12.25 million construction of a two-story classroom/administration building and a \$750,000 new central quad. The two-story building is set to start by





fall 2021. Portables are also set to be destroyed in Part A.

Part B includes the demolition of existing classroom wings, a \$7 million new Career Technical Education (CTE) building, and a new parking area on the South Side.

A look at what the outdoor quad might look like from the old PHS gym.

The old CTE building would be demolished in Phase 2, which also calls for \$8.2 million modernization of Om Wraith Field with concessions.

**Ponderosa Elementary**

The plan calls for \$7.6 million in Phase 1 work there. That includes a repair to Switchgear/ Low Voltage, miscellaneous fire repairs, gas

pipng, campus-wide fencing, painting permanent facilities, a new multi-purpose facility, and administration building, reseed grass, resurface hardcourts and relocate lay structures (from PRES). That phase is expected to be done by fall 2021.

Phase 2 there will cost almost \$10.8 million and will modernize classrooms and build a STEAM Lab.

**Cedarwood**

The plan calls for \$666,926 of Phase 1 work that includes a new playground, campus-wide fencing, and a paint job. Phase 2 will cost \$8.4 million and include demolition of the portables and the construction of a new classroom wing and a \$6.05 million STEAM Lab.

**Pine Ridge**

Phase 1 work there will cost \$456,167 in campus-wide fencing, and a paint job. Phase 2 there will cost almost \$7.5 million. It includes the demolition of the portables and the construction of a \$5.375 million classroom wing and STEAM Lab.

**Paradise Intermediate**

PUSD will spend \$290,293 in Phase 1 work there. That will include debris removal, a paint job, provide ADA upgrades, the demolition of the portables, and campus-wide fencing. Phase 2 invests \$12.85 million to modernize classrooms and build a STEAM Lab.

**District Maintenance and Operations facilities**

A look at what PUSD's new maintenance and operations yard might look like when it opens in Fall 2021.

The district plans to spend \$4.02 million on a new Maintenance and Operations Facility along with food service and offices on Pearson Road. The new offices there might be used for future school board meetings as well and is expected to be completed by Fall 2021.

They plan to preserve the Paradise Elementary site for future growth.





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