

AGENDA: March 5, 2015

TO: Regional Transportation Commission
FROM: George Dondero, Executive Director
RE: Director's Report

THIS ITEM FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Welcome New Commissioners

A hearty welcome to our four new commissioners – Ed Bottorff, Karina Cervantez, Cynthia Chase, and Jimmy Dutra. We hope you find serving on the Commission to be interesting and fruitful. On April 1 at 9:30 AM our staff will meet with you for an orientation session so that we may help you make sense of the alphabet soup of acronyms that get tossed about at our meetings. Note that Commissioner Alternates are also invited to this session.

Aptos Rail Corridor Clean Up

RTC partnered with the Volunteer Center and about 30 volunteers to paint out graffiti and clean up the rail corridor from State Park Drive to the rail trestle over Highway 1 on a Saturday in Feb. Two truckloads of trash were hauled out and approximately ½ mile of walls on both sides of the tracks were painted. **Another clean up day is scheduled for March 21st near 17th Avenue at 10 am.**

La Selva Beach Railroad Trestle Completion Ceremony

About 150 people attended the La Selva Beach Railroad Trestle completion ceremony held on a spectacularly gorgeous day. Neighbors serenaded the crowd with ukuleles and train songs, Commission chair Leopold and 2nd District Commissioner Friend provided information about the purpose and need for more transportation options in our community. Project manager Michael Dorsa gave a fascinating description of the construction process, and Santa Cruz & Monterey Bay Railway General Manager Jeff Weeks talked about their plans for freight and excursion passenger rail service. At least 6 media outlets covered the event including television stations KSBW, KION and KMST and newspapers Santa Cruz Sentinel, Register-Pajaronian and the Times Publishing Group.

A feasibility analysis of other passenger rail services is underway and the draft plan is expected to be available for public review this spring. Completion of the La Selva Beach Trestle and three other bridge projects meet a condition that was included in the purchase agreement, and officially re-opens the corridor as an active rail line. For safety reasons, bicycling and walking access to the corridor will only be accommodated as trail sections are completed. The public is encouraged to visit the RTC website or sign up for eNews to receive information about future projects on the rail corridor.

Central Coast Coalition Legislative Day

On March 11 Commissioner Leopold, Commissioner Lane and I will spend a day in Sacramento for the annual Coalition Leg Day. Each year board members and executive directors of the five Central Coast Counties (Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Benito, San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara) spend a day to advance our collective knowledge of statewide activities affecting transportation funding and policy, and to meet with our representatives to keep them informed of our priorities and needs. The morning will include meetings with some key people involved in policy and funding, including Brian Kelly, Secretary, Ca. State Transportation Agency, Chris Woods, Budget Director for the Speaker of the State Assembly, Jim Frazier, Chair, Assembly Transportation Committee and Will Kempton, Executive Director, California Transportation Commission. Over lunch we'll be meeting with Keith Dunn, Executive Director of the Self Help Counties Coalition and Jim Earp, CTC Commissioner. The afternoon will be spent meeting with Senator Bill Monning, Assembly Members Mark Stone and Member Luis Alejo.

Current RTC Art Exhibit

The current artist on exhibit with the RTC is painter Sandy Takashima Shaw. Sandy also teaches art at Mt. Madonna School as well as high school students and adults at her private studio in Aptos. The last exhibit at the RTC featured the art of Sandy's students from Mt. Madonna School and the Pleasant Valley Art Studio and was very well received at a First Friday event in February. Sandy's paintings will be on display at the RTC through April 30th. Her website address it is: <http://sandyshawart.com/> and her art can be viewed Monday through Friday from 8am to 5pm excluding weekends and holidays.

