

## Carmel Valley man dies during search for missing dog

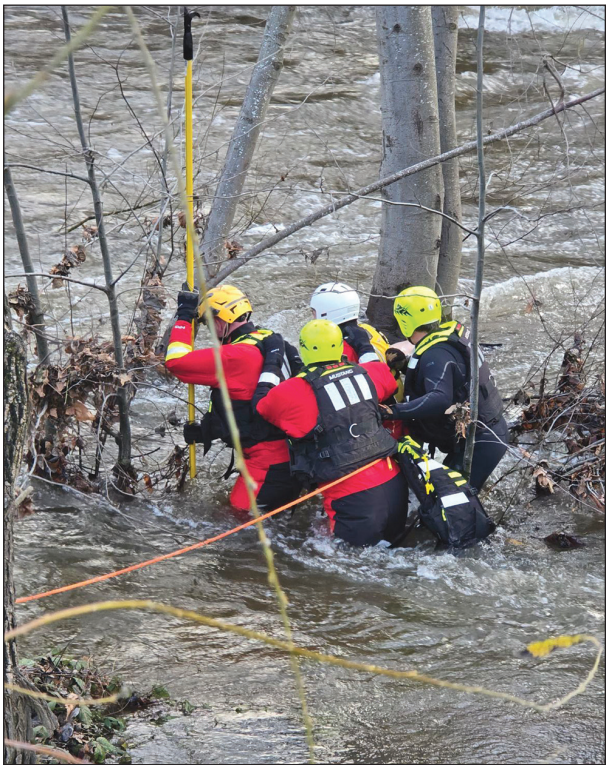
By MARY SCHLEY

A HIKER who went in search of his lost dog at Garland Ranch Regional Park Friday was later found dead in the Carmel River, according to the Monterey County Sheriff's Office. It's unknown exactly how the victim, 77-year-old Carmel Valley resident Steven Sherwood, died, and an autopsy was set for Wednesday.

Sherwood's wife reported him missing the morning of Feb. 14, according to sheriff's department spokesman Cmdr. Andy Rosas, after he went for a walk in the park around 9:30 a.m. and lost his dog.

"He told the family that he would be searching for his dog and was last heard from at about 10:30 a.m.," Rosas said. Around a half-hour later, hikers in the area came across the pup and returned the pet to Sherwood's

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PHOTO/MCSO

A swift-water recovery was conducted in Carmel River at Garland Park to retrieve the body of a Carmel Valley man who had gone missing a few hours earlier while looking for his dog.

## County weighing guaranteed income to residents

By KELLY NIX

MONTEREY COUNTY supervisors this week directed county staff to explore the idea of implementing a "universal income" program, which could mean that some residents get free cash every month with no strings attached.

At its meeting in Salinas Tuesday, the panel voted 5-0 to approve the Community Impact Action Plan 2025-2030, which includes numerous "equity" initiatives that the county's civil rights office contends will benefit government employees and residents.

The plan, according to the staff report, is "a recommitment to centering racial equity, dismantling systems that have caused harm in the community, and rebuilding and re-designing policies, programs and practices to achieve a more equitable and thriving community for all residents."

Within the document — which is a continuation of the county's racial equity plan that ran from 2019 to 2024 — is a category entitled "universal income and economic justice," which calls for a study to explore the "feasibility" of such a program.

### Prepaid debit card

How it would work, including who would be eligible and who would foot the bill, is unclear. But other cities and counties with income programs in California and

## Council back to drawing board on police station

### ■ Wants short-term fixes

By MARY SCHLEY

THE AGING police station is in such bad shape it should probably be red-tagged, Carmel Police Chief Paul Tomasi said during emotional testimony at a city council meeting Feb. 10. The council — which includes three newly elected members — pledged to do something about it, but it's unlikely a major move toward remodeling or rebuilding the station will happen anytime soon.

In the meantime, council members advocated for fixing critical health-and-safety issues, such as giving officers a safe, ventilated space to handle hazardous evidence like deadly fentanyl.

At the end of the nearly three-hour special meeting dedicated to the topic, at which consultant Indigo architects also provided conceptual plans for remodeling and expanding the station and adjacent public works to better accommodate what makes up half the city's workforce, council members also concluded they need to compile a list of Carmel P.D.'s needs and the square footage they require, consider alternative plans created by residential architect Safwat Malek, see what other local talent might be helpful and discuss ways to pay for what could be a \$30-plus million project.

"We're going to take some action," Mayor Dale

Byrne promised. "This council is ready to do something."

### Eight years and counting

The problems with the station, which was built nearly 60 years ago, have been the subject of discussion since May 2017, when the then-city council allocated \$250,000

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RENDERING/SAFWAT MALEK, ENVIRO INTERNATIONAL

Local architect Safwat Malek offered an alternative design for remodeling the police station and public works.

## RAINWATER CAUSES LITHIUM BATTERY FIRE TO REKINDLE

By KELLY NIX

THE BATTERY storage facility in Moss Landing where a large fire occurred in January reignited Tuesday night, prompting a massive emergency response and a caution from county officials to nearby residents to close their windows. The fire was under control the next morning.

An official with the Environmental Protection Agency said this week that the agency is working with facility owner Vistra to de-link, or disconnect, the batteries to reduce the chances of another large fire.

### Smoke and flames

At about 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, smoke was seen coming from the Vistra Moss Landing Energy Storage Facility off Highway 1. North County Fire Protection District, Vistra personnel and others arrived on scene to assess the source, and a drone was deployed. North County Fire Protection District Chief Joel Mendoza told reporters Wednesday afternoon that when his crews arrived Tuesday night, a light plume of smoke was emitting from the building

where the Jan. 16 fire occurred.

As firefighters were notifying other agencies about the incident, "the smoke began to intensify and eventually turned into flames," Mendoza said. "The fire started underneath a pile of rubble in a section that had previously burned" in the Jan. 16 fire, which forced about 1,500 people to evacuate the area.

Throughout Tuesday night, the fire burned at "different

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PHOTO/MIKE BUFFO, HOUSE OF 8 MEDIA

The large fire that broke out Jan. 16 inside this burned-out building at the Vistra battery facility flared up this week.

## Temporary ban on gun shops OK'd in Monterey

By MARY SCHLEY

VOCAL OPPOSITION to a couple's plans to operate a gun store in a neighborhood near the Naval Postgraduate School prompted the Monterey City Council Tuesday to unanimously adopt an emergency ordinance preventing any others from opening while decision-makers figure out what to do about them.

The business at the heart of the outcry, L&B Firearm Solutions, received a business license from the city last October and is set to occupy a long-vacant storefront. The city's code allows retail shops to open without permits, and the L&B store will not be affected by the ban.

Because city laws are silent on where gun stores can open and how they operate, planning director Kimberly Cole recommended the council adopt the emergency

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