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ATASCADERO NEWS

ATASCADERO, CALIFORNIA

FRIDAY, JULY 29, 2016

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LOCAL



Nicholas Mattson/Atascadero News

Atascadero Kiwanis Key Club members, Antonia Anguilano, right, and Vignette Mendoza, middle, receive their Kiwanis hamburger from Kiwanis member and Atascadero Mayor Tom O'Malley on Monday evening at the California Mid-State Fair.

Kiwanis serve fair grub

Decades of fundraising keeps bellies full at the Mid-State Fair

BY NICHOLAS MATTSON
OF THE ATASCADERO NEWS

For more than 40 years, the Kiwanis of Atascadero has served food from their station at the California Mid-State Fair selling from a menu of classic Americana fair-friendly delicacies to raise money for their scholarship program.

The Kiwanis food booth is run by volunteers, and the proceeds from the burgers, Eggs Kiwanis, curly fries and drinks go to support a dozen scholarships the Kiwanis grant to graduating high school students each year.

Before the annual Kiwanis Mayors' Winemaker Dinner began five years ago, the Kiwanis food booth was the biggest fundraiser the Kiwanis held. Serving food to hungry fair-goers, and raising money for the kids.

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A happy customer grabs a bite to eat at the Kiwanis food booth on Monday at the California Mid-State Fair.

LOCAL



Nicholas Mattson/Atascadero News

Two Cal Fire firefighters secure the blaze on unit 53 during Tuesday's fire at Lost Oaks Mobile Home Park on San Diego Way in Atascadero. One firefighter hits the home with foam water to soak the structure, and another takes a visual through an open window where firefighters salvage the interior.

Fire claims home in Lost Oaks park

Mobile home goes up in flames, crews save neighborhood

BY NICHOLAS MATTSON
OF THE ATASCADERO NEWS

ATASCADERO — At 2:20 p.m. on Tuesday, Antonia Tway, a resident of Lost Oak Mobile Home Park called 911 after hearing a couple explosions down the street from her home, and the neighborhood became a staging area for resources from seven fire departments in near-100-degree heat. Atascadero Police Chief Jerel Haley was one of the first responders to the scene and called in for support.

The fire took unit 53 entirely, and significantly damaged unit 52, before crews were able to suppress the fire.

Units from the Atascadero Fire Department, Atascadero State Hospital, Cal Fire, Paso Robles FD, SLO City FD, Santa Margarita, and a breathing support and an engine from Templeton FD converged on the scene to contain the blaze from spreading through the mobile home park.

Meanwhile, Debra Morris, the homeowner of unit 53, received a call while enjoying an otherwise peaceful day at Ravine Waterpark in Paso Robles with her two boys — Connor, 13, and Hunter, 5.

"We had no idea it was happening," Morris said. "My boyfriend called and said 'Hey, you need to go home right now. I'm on way home from Santa Barbara, and you need to go home now — your house is on fire.'"

With no idea what to expect when she got home, Morris drove 19 miles from Ravine to her home off San Diego Way in Atascadero.

"We were not sure if it was mine or if it was the neighboring
See **FIRE, A9**

GOVERNMENT

Seats on local City Councils slated for November election

STAFF REPORT

ATASCADERO — Election season is heating up, and choices for the President of the United States have been narrowed down, with national conventions making final calls for their constituencies. For the local races, candidates are still making the decision for themselves.

The window for declaring for candidacy with San Luis Obispo County opened on July 18, and will run through Friday, Aug. 12.

During that time, candidates are expected to file declarations with San Luis Obispo County for the upcoming November election.

Atascadero and Paso Robles both have seats up for election on the respective City Council's and potential to both make decisions about the seat of Mayor.

Atascadero's mayoral chair will be voted on this year, as incumbent Tom O'Malley's second term comes to an end. Candidates are yet to be announced.

Paso Robles Mayor Steve Martin has two

years left on his term, but joined the race for the 1st District Supervisor, currently held by Frank Mecham.

Mecham announced his retirement, and four men mounted campaigns for the position — Martin, Paso Robles City Councilman John Hamon, businessman John Peschong, and attorney Dale Gustin.

Following the June 7 primaries, Martin and Peschong will face off in November.

If Martin wins in November, the City of Paso Robles will be down one mayor, and will Paso

Robles will resume the process of filling the position of Mayor.

Two City Council seats will be up for election for Paso Robles, as Councilmember Steve Gregory and Mayor Pro Tem Fred Strong's terms expire.

For Atascadero, incumbents Bob Kelley and Roberta Fonzi have yet to announce their intent to run, but their seats will be on the ballot in November.

Declaring for candidacy can be done through
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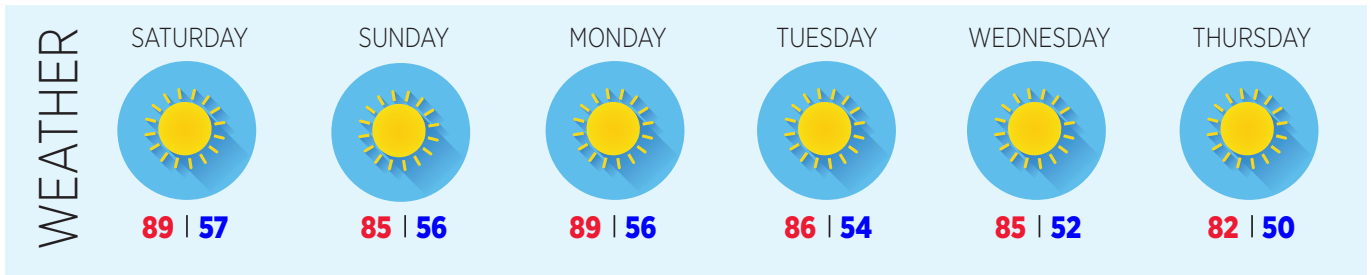


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KIWANIS

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Longtime Atascadero local Pete Boonisar was at the fair on Monday evening, enjoying the festivities and snapping photos. He had just come from dinner at the Kiwanis food booth, which he said was a habit for him at the fair.

"They have great food and do a great job for our community," Boonisar said. "We eat there six out of seven times we come to the fair."

Stepping up to the window, fair-goers that evening would be served by one of two Atascadero icons — Atascadero Mayor Tom O'Malley, or Mary Sherwin of K-Jon's Fine Jewelers — both Kiwanis members.

One patron during the late rush at 8 p.m. told O'Malley that the Kiwanis had the best food at the fair, at the best price.

"Another satisfied customer," O'Malley said.

The busy time of the day depends on what is going on at the fair, according to Kiwanis Community Service Director John Ramsey.

"Usually [busy] around sale days like Saturday, or buying day, which is Thursday," Ramsey said, "or a show day, like Blake Shelton or Tim McGraw."

The heat made its usual appearance at the fair, with temperatures in the triple-digits, but the evening cooled off on Monday while the grill in the Kiwanis food booth stayed hot, with Kiwanian Albert Almodova manning the grill.

"Our hottest item is our Eggs Kiwanis, which is our breakfast sandwich," Almodova said. "It's a hamburger bun with cheese, bacon, eggs, and mayonnaise on it. They are our hottest mover, even for lunch and dinner. We serve them all night."

The simplicity of the Eggs Kiwanis is matched by a power punch of flavor.

"It exceeds anything you can get from a fast food or burger place — like your Breakfast Jack or McDonalds McMuffin," Almodova said. "The flavor and taste of the Eggs Kiwanis is something that you've never experienced before. Once you've had it ... people come back and get five of them. It's that good."

Eggs Kiwanis was created by Doug Leeds "many years ago" and compliments a menu that boasts the "best burgers" at the fair.

"You ask anybody, we have the best burgers," Almodova said. "Anywhere we go, Food



Kiwanis member and cook Albert Almodova, left, puts the final touches on a made-to-order hamburger at the Kiwanis food booth on Monday at the California Mid-State Fair. Stan Sherwin of K-Jon's Fine Jewelers, right, assisted in the kitchen.

is the same, but we have the best burgers."

Almodova said the burger was also his favorite to cook, and gave him a chance to put an artistic final touch on the handful of a meal.

"Not only does it taste good, we give it a nice presentation," Almodova said. "It looks like a healthy burger, and tastes as good as it looks. It is an awesome burger — awesome."

The fair has grown up over the past 40 years, but the reason it stays so popular is the essence of its origins remain, with rodeo, livestock, music, friendly faces, and great food like the Kiwanis.

The Kiwanis joined the fair when Kiwanians Otto Heilmann and Glenn Sawyer began serving from a plywood shed, more than 40 years ago. The Kiwanis transitioned to a trailer until finally finding a home in its current location east of the Chumash Grandstand entrance.

A couple of former Kiwanis Key Club members — Vianette Mendoza and Maria Anguiano — ordered a hamburger during a shift at a nearby churro stand. Mendoza and Anguiano were both recipients of Kiwanis scholarships and will use that money to pursue their college educations.

Mendoza said the two showed up to a meeting for the Key Club after a teacher announced it in class.

"They said they had pizza," Anguiano said chuckling, "but we needed community service hours, because we were involved in [AVID]."

AVID is a nonprofit organization that teaches skills and behaviors for academic success, provides support and strong student-teacher relationships, and develops a sense of hope for personal achievement gained through hard work and determination.

"AVID helped us prepared for college," Mendoza said.

With Key Club experience and a Kiwanis scholarship in their pocket, the two are headed off to institutions of higher learning. Mendoza is headed to CSU Stanislaus to study child development, and Anguiano will attend Cal Poly, focusing on nutrition and premed.

At the end of the 13-hour day, the Kiwanis shut down at 8:30 p.m. and cleaned up the booth for the next shift, incoming at 7 a.m. the next morning — ready to serve a host of hungry heads in the second week of the California Mid-State Fair.

"We are the least expensive place in the fair to get food and water," Almodova said, "and it is good down-home family cooking. Kiwanis is a family, and we are here to serve our family in the community. That's what it is."

FIRE

Continued from Page A1

ones," Morris said. "Then we got the confirmation that it was mine, but we did not know how bad it was until we drove by on the freeway and got off on Santa Barbara and came back — and there was no back of my house."

Thick black smoke poured out of the back of units 52 and 53 at Lost Oaks, and motorists from Highway 101 were catching and posting video of the early moments of the blaze to social media sites as they passed through Atascadero.

The smoke billowed out of the rear of the units, and filled the neighborhood with smoke. Neighbors gathered safely away from the fire, sharing support and stories of the incident.

"There was one explosion, then another explosion," Tway said. "That is when I went and checked. I went outside, and the police said 'evacuate immediately.'"

With smoke and uncertainty filling the complex, neighbors made calls to loved ones for status updates, and made their way to safety.

"I ran down through the complex," Tway said. "I did not even have shoes on. They said to get out, and I was holding my cat, [Houdini], and my dog, [Hercules]."

Tway was able to grab her pets, and the resident of unit 52 was also able to rescue his dog.

Unfortunately, Morris and her boys were not so lucky. Of all the tangible items lost, it was clear that the loss of the family dog, Pretzel, was a significant loss to her and her two boys — even when presented with a home that was a total loss.

Morris purchased the home less than a year ago, and are now in limbo. She said Connor is having a hard time with the loss of Pretzel, but



Members of CAL FIRE treat unit 52 at Lost Oaks Mobile Home Park after open flames were extinguished during the fire on Tuesday which took unit 53 as a total loss, and badly burned unit 52. Seven fire crews were on site for a few hours containing and suppressing the blaze.

that Hunter was not yet grasping the concept of the fire.

Morris was approached by neighbors with support as the firefighters on scene continued to address ongoing hazards.

"There is going to be a significant amount of overhaul and salvage," AFD Public Information Officer Bill White said, "and actually looking for the hotspots and making sure those hotspots are out."

Hoses, chainsaws, axes, and technology were employed around units 52 and 53, as dozens of firefighters crawled the scene to finish the job.

"We use Thermal Imaging Cameras, or TICs," White said. "Those give a thermal image, and shoot through stuff to make sure things are out. We have heat guns too that shoot a laser and tell us how much heat is in that area."

Crews battled through obstacles to prevent further damage.

"In 52, we are more in the mode of doing salvage so we protect their personal belongings from further damage," White said. "The bulk of the fire and damage is going to be in 53. Luckily, nothing in 51 or 54."

In battling the hotspots, the firefighters used

foam coming from their hoses, which White described as similar to soap, which allowed the water to penetrate deeper into segregated areas of the home to put out hotspots. Crews rotated in and out of the units as exhaustion and heat set in.

"The reason we have so many resources and so many people here is because of how hot it is," White said. "When firefighters are engaged with the structure in their personal protective equipment, it gets really hot and they can't breathe. So we need to have that constant revolving door of personnel available to us. So we called in more help."

Investigators were still gathering evidence concerning the cause of the fire, as conflicting reports came in regarding the origin.

"The cause is still under investigation," White said. "Initial reports were that the fire was seen coming from the freeway side onto this side. We are not quite sure, and it is still under investigation."

Despite the losses, the hot battle was a success as firefighters battled heat, wind, and limited resources to suppress the blaze and save the neighborhood from the hungry blaze.

"For the amount of fire seen when the initial engines got on scene, they did a tremendous job stopping the fire from spreading," White said. "The problem with mobile home parks is they are tight together, so if one goes, then another becomes involved, it is a chain-reaction effect. The crews made an aggressive stop on 53 to contain the fire, then moved on to suppress it in 52. It was an outstanding job."

A GoFundMe account was started for Morris and her family. Donations can be made to gofundme.com/morrishousefund, or dropped off to Jamie Lemoine at Stepping Stones Preschool at 3880 Ardilla Road.

ELECTION

Continued from Page A1

local offices, and filed with San Luis Obispo County. Respective city clerks for Atascadero and Paso Robles can provide candidate packets for in-

terested parties.

To acquire paperwork to declare candidacy for a position on the city councils, an appointment must be made with the respective city clerk.

The deadline for declaration of candidacy is Friday, Aug. 12, except in the event that an incum-

ber decides not to run for re-election. In the case that an incumbent does not run, the deadline to register as a candidate is extended for five days — in which time the incumbent is not given the opportunity to declare, but the general public is welcomed to pursue political office.

The Paso Robles City Clerk can be reached at 237-3888, and Atascadero City Clerk can be reached at 461-5000.

Following the Aug. 12 deadline for declaration of candidacy, the Atascadero News and Paso Robles Press will announce the full list of candidates.