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SECTION
SATURDAY
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CENTRAL COAST

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Small businesses
face uncertainty with
budget issue **B3**

NCSD's 2009-10 budget 'in the black'

Balance of \$1.1 million projected

By **Max Hesson**
ASSOCIATE EDITOR
mhesson@santamariatimes.com

While many government agencies are struggling financially as the economy circles the drain, Nipomo Community Services District directors last week approved a 2009-10 budget that shows a surplus of more than \$1.1 million.

Total revenues are projected at more than \$6.3 million, or 36 percent more than the 2008-09 budget, with total expenditures pegged at more than \$7.2 million, or about 9 percent more than 2008-09.

Rather than laying off personnel, as many government agencies are, the budget allows for the addition of two utility workers to do preventive maintenance work.

Although three individual operations and maintenance funds will be in the red and the district still needs to find \$2.3 million for two major projects, the overall budget will have a positive balance barring any catastrophic unforeseen circumstances.

This district has been very prudent, NCSD General Manager Bruce Bad said. The directors have tried very hard to match the funding with the needs. ... What the board has done, to

their credit, is develop these five-year financial plans and adopt three-year rate studies that enable them to match revenue with need levels, he explained.

Operations and maintenance accounts showing deficits are the Town Sewer, Blacklake Street Lighting and Blacklake Sewer Replacement funds.

The Town Sewer Fund is projected to have a deficit of \$32,041, but in a report to NCSD directors, Bad noted a rate increase in April 2008 is

allowing the current rates and charges to cover all of the operating costs, including \$372,300 in funded replacement.

Some \$454,400 is being transferred into the account from the Town Sewer Capacity Fund, which has more than \$8.5 million in capital improvement projects budgeted.

A deficit of \$2,564 is projected for the Blacklake Street Lighting Fund because the current charges don't

See NCSD / B2

Clay artist opens studio on Mesa and begins teaching classes

Using technique that is much like wood carving

By **Annex Charlton**
SENIOR STAFF WRITER
annex@santamariatimes.com

Clay artist Annie Capelli believes when her students open the kiln at her Arroyo Grande Mesa-based studio, it should be like opening the best gift ever.

It should be like Christmas, Capelli said from inside her just-finished, recycled cedar houselike studio, where she teaches art classes to youth and adults.

Many times, what is put inside a kiln is the finished product that the artist envisioned before firing the piece, especially when color is involved. Temperature and where a piece is placed in the kiln will dictate the end result of the artwork, Capelli said.

Sometimes it is fun to not know what you're going to get from a kiln, she said. There's a lot of trial and error. Because Capelli, who also paints and draws, wanted to offer her students a process where what they painted on the clay is what they see, the artist has begun dabbling in sgraffito.

Sgraffito requires cutting away parts of a surface layer of clay and plaster are mostly used to expose a different colored layer beneath. Capelli equates the process

to wood carving. It's not a hard thing to do, she said. A beginner can do this. It's really like drawing into the clay. It's an easy form of artwork.

The Canadian-born artist has started offering creative clay classes that incorporate sgraffito for both adults and youth at her newly opened Art Farm Studio, which boasts three pottery wheels one which makes its home outside.

We thought that would be a nice place for someone to work, Capelli said of the outdoor wheel, adding there are a lot of places in San Luis Obispo County that offer clay. Capelli, who was schooled in fine art at the Ontario College of Art in Toronto, and received her first kiln at age 20, enjoys working with clay because it's malleable, and you can do anything to it.

Clay has a memory. Anything that you do to it, it will hold that shape.

Marion Trainor, an Art Farm Studio student, has just started working with clay, and said she has been enjoying getting her hands dirty and creating art, something she hasn't done for years.

It feels fun and easy. Trainor said, as she worked on a starfish that she planned to hang on the wall after it was painted and fired. It's really fun to sort of be a kid again.

Capelli's studio is made from reclaimed wood and sits

See STUDIO / B2



Bryan Walter/Staff

Annie Capelli makes a bowl on one of the throwing wheels in the studio at her art farm at her property on the mesa where she teaches art classes. Capelli was born in Canada and studied art in Toronto before moving to the U.S. about 15 years ago. She recently created her art farm studio.

Holiday affects services today

Mail won't be delivered and post offices are closed today because of the Fourth of July holiday.

Banks that typically are open on Saturdays also will be closed today, and the Department of Motor Vehicles says the agency will also observe the holiday today.

While most trash collection wasn't affected, landfills in Lompoc and Santa Maria also are closed today.

Additionally, Santa Maria Area Transit, City of Lompoc Transit and other buses won't operate today due to the holiday.

Staff report

The extra cost of Green



Photos by Jon Gotsage/Staff

The green/sustainable Santa Barbara County building is seen Thursday in Santa Maria. Below, valves are seen in the Hydronic Metering Room at the county building.

SUSTAINABLE BUILDINGS BRINGING UP QUESTIONS

By **Sam Womack**
STAFF WRITER
swomack@santamariatimes.com

Santa Barbara County has been trying to be a leader in constructing green or sustainable government buildings, but has run into a few kinks with the past few projects.

Most recently, the Board of Supervisors was forced to approve a \$136,800 contract to install an air-conditioning system in the brand-new combined fire and sheriff building near Lompoc.

The structure was built with the sheriff's side facing south, leaving deputies and clerical staff to be boiled by the sun on hot days.

One day I was so hot my clerical staff had ice packs on their necks, said sheriff's Lt. Julie McCammon. With the windows open, it was 91 degrees inside.

Personnel from the Fire Department's side were even called over to see one of the staff members who was about to pass out. Sheriff Bill Brown told the Board of Supervisors last month.

The 12,500-square-foot building was created with sustainability and green goals in mind, so the windows were double-paned and tinted, and a mechanical and natural ventilation was utilized, county staff said. But air-conditioning was not included.

The project budget was \$5.5 million, according to county staff.

Several times during the planning and design process, air conditioning was discussed, but then discarded, said



county General Services Director Bob Nisbet.

The fire and sheriff staff moved into the new building at 3500 Harris Grade Road in October 2008, and quickly realized that an air-conditioning system was absolutely necessary.

The building is designed so poorly, anyone who had ever been to Lompoc would know that the south side is going to get cooked, said 4th District Supervisor Paul Gray, upon hearing the staff's complaints.

The windows should be facing the ocean to catch the offshore breeze, she added.

The developer for the site was Maino Construction of San Luis Obispo and the architect was RDM Design Group.

When investigations were made into whether the architect could be held accountable, county counsel found that the contract was not specific about keeping the structure cool.

Nisbet estimated that the new cooling system will be in place by the fall months, so the sheriff's clerical staff may have to endure a few more uncomfortably hot work days during the summer.

The Lompoc fire and sheriff's joint project had energy-saving features in the design, whereas the North County public works building at 620 W. Foster Road, which also has some issues made use of many green and sustainable materials.

See GREEN / B4

VAFB center serves military families

Airman & Family Readiness Center will receive portion of Military Ball proceeds

By **Morgan Telford**
CONTRIBUTOR

Like people in any community, military personnel get behind on bills, find their cupboards almost bare, need emergency loans for necessities, or can't afford family counseling.

All these problems could be daunting for airman and their families whose normal support systems of extended relatives are miles away.

But military personnel and families needing per-

sonal and financial trage can seek out the Airman & Family Readiness Center (A&FRC) at Vandenberg Air Force Base.

Those programs will gain a financial boost from Lompoc Military Ball on Saturday, July 11, at the Veterans Memorial Building, 100 E. Locust Ave.

The Airman & Family Readiness Center is a safety net for the family of Tech. Sgt. Adam Roberts, while the 30th Civil Engineer Squadron member is de-

ployed in Iraq.

His wife, Maria Roberts, who lives on base with sons Jordan, 10, Jacob, 7, and Liam, 10 months, relies on the moral support and family programs at A&FRC.

For instance, the center lets families link up with their deployed military members for free 30-minute morale calls twice a week.

Maria is among the two-parent households suddenly flying solo in keeping caring for children, home, yard, she recently fixed the lawn-mower.

The most difficult thing to deal with is having to be in 20 places at once, Maria

Roberts said, crediting her resilience to her mother, a single mom.

While military members such as Adam Roberts are half a world away, the support work continues at home.

Help is the operative word at Vandenberg's Airman & Family Readiness Center, where Tech. Sgt. Molly Drziklo, Readiness NCO, coordinates the many military and local community services, goods, donations and programs that are available at multiple locations.

The A&FRC assists not

See CENTER / B2