


SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY FARM BUREAU'S

FARMER & RANCHER

FB

MAGAZINE

JANUARY 2010



Rural Crime Prevention Task Force Covers the County...page 8

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



By Richard Gonzales, President
SLO County Farm Bureau



Buzz Words

The media loves them. Recently, Cal Poly had their panel discussion on "The Sustainability of Agriculture," and I had the opportunity to attend and hear the diverse perspectives presented that day.

One of the viewpoints of particular interest was from Myra Goodman, who is one of the owners/founders of Earthbound Farms. Her point was that even in the organic market, profit has to exist as part of the "sustainability" picture. This is a fact of which every farmer and rancher is acutely aware.

So, when we look to our local, state and federal governments, we should ask, what is their view of sustainability? With "run-away" spending, they would do right by the consumers to look at cost-cutting measures along with options to increase tax revenues by helping private businesses become more profitable.

As farmers and ranchers become more profitable, they will do what they always have, and spend more on goods, services and infrastructure which keeps our whole economy "SUSTAINABLE."

—Richard Gonzales

In conjunction with the feature article about Rural Crime Prevention and the SLO County Task Force, cut out the information below and post it where you can reach it when needed.

We are proud to have these experienced officers on the Central Coast.

Thank you to all law enforcement officers serving our county.

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Rural Crime Prevention Specialist
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Desk: 781-4578

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356 North Main Street, Templeton;
(805) 434-4290

Coastal Station
Deputy Pete Cramer – Cell (805) 305-7409
2099 10th Street, Los Osos; (805) 528-6083

South County Station
Deputy Darren Davidson – (805) 305-7407
1681 Front Street, Oceano; (805) 473-7100

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY FARM BUREAU'S FARMER FB & RANCHER MAGAZINE

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COVER PHOTO

The Rural Crime Prevention Task Force works with farmers and ranchers throughout San Luis Obispo County, including in California Valley (left).

Great Day Greeted AGventure #7!

by Lorraine Clark, Ag Education Committee Coordinator

Wonderful fall weather kicked in just in time for the Seventh Great AGventure, October 7, 2009, at the Paso Robles Event Center. This marked the largest turnout so far, with 1,474 fourth-grade students, 229 parent chaperones and 53 teachers from all over San Luis Obispo County gathering together to connect with agriculture.

Volunteers from all facets of the agricultural industry create the educational field day by showcasing their expertise to children who have little opportunity to associate themselves with any kind of agriculture.

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Fourth graders learn from hands-on participation with biofuel (above), cow milking and cotton demonstrations (below).

SLO County Farm Bureau CALENDAR

JANUARY

- 7 Edna Farm Center
- 11 Farm Bureau Women
- 15 Adelaida Farm Center
- 18 North Coast Farm Center
- 26 Board of Directors' Meeting

FEBRUARY

- 4 Edna Farm Center
- 8 Farm Bureau Women
- 18 Adelaida Farm Center
- 23 Board of Directors' Meeting



Support AGventure! by Mary Silveira

Taking photographs for Great AGventure is always rewarding and a great opportunity to feature 1400 fourth graders from around the county in a perfect learning environment. Ag Education Committee Coordinator Lorraine Clark works all year to bring the best agricultural presentations to students. With more than 100 presenters and many, many volunteers, teachers and students are guaranteed a day they will never forget.

Those in agriculture must constantly educate consumers as to how their food is grown, gets to market and stays viable. It sometimes feels as if elements, other than weather, are against the farmer, and promotion is always needed.

Please take a few minutes to enjoy the pictures of children learning what and where their food is grown, raised or marketed and then fill out the form below that says you will support the Great AGventure in 2010.

**Our children need to understand agriculture...
Their food source depends on it!**

San Luis Obispo County
Agriculture Education Committee

Your Support Stays Local!



Make a charitable gift to benefit agriculture—
Sponsor a class at the **Great AGventure 2010!**

Yes, I would like to make a tax deductible donation in the amount of

\$50 \$100 \$250
 \$500 \$1000 Other

Choose from the above donation amounts and send check directly, payable to SLO County Agriculture Education Committee, 651 Tank Farm Rd., San Luis Obispo, CA 93401. For questions, call (805) 543-7356.

501(c)3 charitable organization Tax ID# 77-0449080

Your tax deductible donation makes this dynamic program available to children throughout San Luis Obispo County — see video at slofarmbureau.org/Programs/sloaged/greatagventure

AGventure continued from page 3



More than 50 fabulous presentations ranged in subject material from tractors and balers to veterinary medicine to farrier science, horses, water drilling, apple grafting, cattle, abalone, grapes, biofuel, working dogs, the fishing industry and more!

Students also participate in an "AG-tivity" where they get involved with making butter, roping calf dummies, collecting eggs, stacking hay, investigating owl pellets, making paper quilt squares or dissecting a cotton boll.

Many teachers return each year with their new class of fourth graders. They are asked to give their input as to the educational value of the program. Teachers' replies to the question, "Do you feel that your students gained agricultural knowledge through this program?" include the following:

- "Absolutely. Hopefully they will realize how important farming and production are to our economy and the convenience they provide."
- "Yes! So many of the kids haven't touched a baby cow or know what cattle ranching is about. It was all positive exposure!"
- "Yes! And so did I!"

The program is supported with both pre- and post-event lesson resources so that the agricultural discovery extends into the classroom and into many subject areas.

The day is offered each year free of charge to schools throughout the county. Sponsors from organizations, companies and individuals subsidize the event with most of the expenses going directly to transportation costs.

Thanks to our sponsors this year that include Paso Robles Chamber Agri-Business Committee, Farm



Credit West, Filipponi & Thompson, Farm Supply, Bejo Seeds, Coastal Research Services, Creston Farm Center, SLO County and many generous individuals.

Thanks, also, to organizations such as CattleWomen, Agriculture Education Committee, Farm Bureau and San Miguel Lion's Club, whose members devote time and energy to make the day a huge success, teaching our kids and community about agriculture!

Roping practice (top); Kubota tractor; NRCS soils demonstration; teaching opportunity (upper left); baling demonstration (lower left).



AROUND SLO COUNTY

Survey of Local Agriculture Production for 2009 Begins in January

by Judy Groat, San Luis Obispo County Department of Agriculture

San Luis Obispo County's Dept. of Agriculture seeks help collecting important statistical crop and livestock yield and value information from local producers of agricultural commodities.

Each year the department collects data by mailing growers and producers a simple, confidential survey form. Data is summarized and reported into the county's Annual Crop Report. The Report contains a wealth of information about local agriculture such as a detailed listing of production units and values for local commodities including nursery plants, vineyards, fruits and vegetables, livestock and field crops.

"Information in the Crop Report is important in tracking the health of this county's economy, and it provides an analysis of the value of local agriculture," says Agricultural Commissioner Bob Lilley. In 2008 the value of our local agricultural crops was estimated from survey data at \$606,745,000.

"It's important and beneficial for growers and livestock producers to provide our department the information by mailing the survey form to our office," Lilley says. "Statistics are used to determine values when requesting local crop disaster declarations; bankers and lenders use the data to make informed decisions;

and local economic forecasters track trends based upon accurate and current data. We highly encourage participation in the survey and ask growers to fill-out and return the survey form so we can have the best information possible for the 2009 Annual Crop Report."

Individual survey figures are kept strictly confidential but are necessary to determine an accurate total value for each commodity. Surveys are mailed to producers in January. For more survey information, contact Judy Groat, Agricultural Inspector/Biologist, at (805) 781-5910. For past Crop Reports go to www.slocounty.ca.gov/agcomm.



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Multi-Billion Dollar Deficit Projected for CA Reforms Needed to Fix Government, But Not at Expense of Taxpayer Protections by Assemblyman Sam Blakeslee

The Legislative Analysts Office (LAO) recently released its annual Fiscal Outlook for the 2010–2011 budget year that starts in July. As you may have heard, the report did not paint a pretty picture about California’s finances. The LAO projects a \$20.7 billion deficit between now and the end of the 2010-2011 budget year. This forecast makes it clear that California’s budget remains structurally imbalanced.

California is lagging behind most states on the road to economic recovery. The Legislature must correct the punitive regulatory and tax climate that is driving jobs away and hurting

state revenue. California’s state government is ripe for reforms to fix the dysfunction, and the Legislature needs to improve efficiency and accountability in government, and cut down on the layers of bureaucracy.

The Senate and Assembly’s Select Committees on Improving State Government are holding hearings throughout the state on how to reform our lawmaking process. The committees, comprised of both Republicans and Democrats, are evaluating major proposals to reform the Legislature and its broken budget system.

Some of the ideas that were discussed in the committee include:



Assemblyman Sam Blakeslee

- Incorporating longer-term planning in budget decisions to reduce the boom and bust nature of economic cycles;
- Exploring performance-based budgeting to encourage efficiency and reward programs that are working;

continued on page 13

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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Editorially speaking by Joy
Fitzhugh, SLO County Farm
Bureau Legislative Analyst

San Luis Obispo County Grading Ordinance Update

Planning to plant a new orchard or vineyard on land with more than a 30 percent slope?
How about a new ag. road to your watering trough? Be prepared to file with San Luis Obispo County
and then go through the RCD/NRCS Alternative Review process or get a county permit.

The Planning Commission's Recommended Grading Ordinance is on the county website and discussed below. It is to be heard at the Board of Supervisors' meeting starting January 26. What could this mean to you?

Read the following proposed regulations. Let the Supervisors know how this ordinance will affect your agricultural operation, using examples whenever possible.

Farm Bureau opposes this heavy-handed ordinance. With the help of our State Farm Bureau (CFBF) and the other county agricultural organizations, we are working to get agriculture's message to our Supervisors.

Proposed Grading Ordinance Regulations Affecting Agriculture

There are three levels to this ordinance: 1) ag. activities allowed without county regulations, 2) ag activities requiring filing of a county form and 3) activities requiring alternative review or a permit.

The Only Ag. Grading Activities Allowed Without County Regulations

- 1) Moving less than the *county's definition* of 50 cubic yards of earth (25 cubic yards, picked up is counted a second time when it is put down, totaling 50 cubic yards). Less than 20 cubic yards in a watercourse involving alteration of a drainage course.
- 2) Preparation of ongoing crop land involving more than 50 cubic yards where the land has been farmed within the last five years.
- 3) Vegetation removal on more than one-half acre of land, *only* if it has

been grazed within the last five years.

- 4) Routine maintenance of existing legally established ag. roads.
- 5) Installation and maintenance of agricultural water pipelines.
- 6) Vegetation clearance strictly for fire safety using CalFire recommendations.

Ag. Activities Requiring Filing a Form With the County Planning Department

- 1) Preparation of new cropland or new pastures (a new spring or well?) on slopes less than 30 percent when moving more than 50 cubic yards cumulatively.
- 2) Installation of small reservoirs, for crops or livestock watering, that are less than one-acre-foot in capacity, are built totally below grade and are not on a stream, lake or marsh.

Ag. Activities Requiring RCD/NRCS Alternative Review or a County Grading Permit

- 1) All new agricultural roads moving more than 50 cubic yards of earth (see *county's definition* at left) regardless of slope.
- 2) Reservoirs for crops or livestock watering with more than one-acre-foot capacity and/or built above the natural grade.
- 3) More than one-half acre of vegetation removal (*whether dirt is moved or not*) for rangeland management where grazing has not occurred for over five years.
- 4) New orchards or vineyards, using hillside benches or other practices, on slopes more than 30 percent.
- 5) Ponds, reservoirs or dams catching

run-off.

- 6) Streambank protection projects.
- 7) Agricultural grading requiring importation or exportation of fill material, except "soil fertility amendments."
- 8) Trails for agricultural production support activities and recreation enhancement of the property.
- 9) Projects for soil, water quality, habitat or wildlife restoration, conservation or enhancement occurring outside of the channel of a stream.

The Alternative Review process is preferable to a county permit. The RCD/NRCS has the expertise to be able to walk you through the paperwork and the process, including getting the state and federal clearances for projects, but normal agricultural practices should not be subject to review or permits.

In early January, we will have additional information to further help you address this issue. If you have questions, information that will help us or would like to be added to our e-mail list, call the Farm Bureau office at (805) 543-3654 or e-mail joy@slofarmbureau.org.

Contact Your Supervisors

- 1) Write to San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors, Rm. D-430, County Government Center, San Luis Obispo, CA 93408.
- 2) E-mail the Board's secretary at sbaker@co.slo.ca.us.
- 3) Speak with the Supervisors.
- 4) Testify at the January 26 hearing.

Rural Crime Prevention Task Force Works to Tend Many Needs

by Mary Silveira

Crime of any nature is unwelcome. To distinguish rural crime from urban crime seems unnecessary because a crime is an action or an instance of negligence that is deemed injurious to the public welfare or morals or to the interests

Rural Crime Prevention Program, based upon the Central Valley Rural Crime Prevention Program authored by Senator Chuck Poochigian, R-Fresno, in 1996.

To better understand the Central Coast program, it's helpful to look

agricultural producers and steal fuel, chemicals, equipment and livestock can devastate their victims."

Sargeant Greg Gularte of the Fresno County Sheriff's Rural Crime Task Force said of SB 453, "Having this bill passed allows the department and the county to provide a unit that is specifically investigating ag-related crimes. Before, an area detective would handle a much larger case-load, which meant that ag-related cases were at the bottom of the pile. This program allows us to investigate cases and run with small details and actually come to a conclusion." [From September 14, 2005, California Farm Bureau Federation (CFBF) *Ag Alert*.]

The eight counties that comprise the program for the Central Valley contribute 60 percent of California's total agricultural production, making the Central Valley the richest agricultural-producing region in the world. The program has been hailed by law enforcement officials across the nation as a model, and it is one of the only crime-prevention programs specifically directed at rural areas, wrote Christine Souza in *Ag Alert*.

The Central Coast, with the help of SB 121, continues as a partner with other counties to provide services that make officers capable of reaching out to rural area crime victims.

"Rural brings to mind agriculture and family farms, sparsely populated areas and a sense of community where the people know one another and act accordingly," says Mark Small of the Institute on Family & Neighborhood in a December 12, 2000, article.



Deputy Ed Bryant, a member of SLO County Sheriff's Department Rural Crime Prevention Task Force, works on daily reports out of his office in Templeton.

of the state and that is legally prohibited. Thus, a crime is a crime is a crime.

But rural crime *is* different. In August 2009, the California legislature passed SB121, which was signed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. This act amended Section 14183 of the Penal Code relating to crime prevention, which authorized specified counties until July 1, 2010, "to develop the Central Coast Rural Crime Prevention Program...."

SB121 now extends the authorized operation of the program until July 1, 2013. The existing law encouraged the counties of Monterey, San Benito, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz and San Luis Obispo to develop, adopt and implement a Central Coast

at the established model. The mission of the Central Valley Rural Crime Prevention Program is to prevent agricultural crime and protect California agriculture in the Central Valley through the integration of law enforcement, agricultural commissioners and prosecution. The program fosters collaboration between county law enforcement and local farmers. It took another bill, SB453 in 2005 by the same senator, to restore funding and continue the program.

"The extension of this program means that the joint task forces put into place across the Central Valley will continue to combat, investigate and prosecute rural crime, and protect California's food supply," Poochigian said. "Thieves who target

Even though these descriptions connote a “good, wholesome lifestyle,” it is neither the lifestyle nor the social, psychological or cultural state of the area that is being protected by the Task Force. With fewer people in rural areas, this lack of density leaves open various opportunities to those who look for them, e.g., criminal elements; therefore, there is a need for rendering specialized crime prevention services.

“The problem in assessing rural crime is that different people look at the same facts and reach very different conclusions,” says Joseph Donnermeyer, director for National Rural Crime Prevention Center, Columbus, Ohio, in his 1994 article, “Crime and Violence in Rural Communities.” He continues, “Looking at rural crime rates over time offers a different view—suggesting that while rural areas today have less crime than their urban counterparts, they also have more crime than they did in the past, and their crime problems are serious.” We are now in the year 2010, and the seriousness of rural crime continues to daunt us.

The seriousness of any crime is weighted in the damage to one personally and economically. When thinking of rural crime, we tend to draw conclusions that all is theft or vandalism and not bodily injury, but it is wrong to identify it so lightly.

Crime of a personal nature is sometimes swept under the rug, and even though the emphasis is on things being stolen or damaged, there are also people—adults and children—and animals who suffer from crime in the rural populations. Most times we neither want nor care to discuss those possibilities. But we must remember that because of the demographics, it is difficult for the Task Force to be all things to all

people. And it is up to the neighbors and family members to be ever-vigilant about what happens a few miles down the road on physical property, and what happens a few miles down the road in the home physically.

Donnermeyer (1994) writes, “A scientific rendition of the social forces causing the level of violence and crime in rural communities to rise can never match the intuitive appeal and succinctness of that Ohio farmer who summed it up in 14 words: ‘We are on the same train as city people, but we’re in the caboose.’ I would only add that some rural communities have moved closer to the front of the train. If there was ever an opportune moment for prevention programming to work, it is now and it is in America’s rural communities.”

While riding with Deputy Ed Bryant on a morning shift in December, I witness firsthand some of the problems and difficulties that are tended to by the Task Force. The

rural areas of San Luis Obispo extend 3,126 square miles in this county’s 2,114,764.8 acres of land.

Our day in the field was limited to following up on complaints of animal abuse in areas from Templeton to California Valley. Frustrating to the officers is the many people who keep a horse or a number of horses without a true knowledge of how to take care of them. Abuse that I witnessed ranged from small ponies with unshod hooves, that were now suffering from curved ankles, to full-grown horses kept in too small an area. Officers approach individuals with instructions on what they must do in order to avoid prosecution for abuse, and most times the individuals will comply.

Deputy Bryant said that keeping up with the humane treatment of animals is one of the important services the rural crime officers meet. Also, repeated visits are necessary

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National “Owner Applied Number” Program Helps Safeguard Your Possessions

As a result of widespread concern for an increased number of rural thefts, the nationwide Owner Applied Number (OAN) program has been initiated in California for the identification of farm machinery, equipment and even household goods.

The FBI has established a system whereby each state and county is assigned a number recorded in the National Crime Information Center. A directory containing these numbers is available to each law enforcement agency for use in identifying the various states and counties.

To apply for an OAN, contact the SLO County Sheriff’s Department at (805) 781-4578 or visit the ACTION website at www.agcrime.net, then go to OAN Counties and Information.

An OAN is issued to the person—not the equipment—so no information about your inventory is needed. Simply enter name,

address, etc., and your OAN will be issued.

For assistance in applying the number to your equipment, contact the SLO County Sheriff’s Department. An OAN brochure is available at Farm Bureau or through the Rural Crime Prevention Specialist.



Task Force continued

to ensure that proper veterinary services are provided when animals are distraught. It is hoped that by doing so, the owner will get on track. Many times owners do not recognize that their animal is being treated improperly; this can be attributed to lack of training or knowledge.

Recently the county has seen a rash of solar panel theft. As technology brightens the future of agriculture, it also brightens the future of the thief. Featured in CFBF's *Ag Alert*, November 11, 2009, is an article, "Solar panel thefts become a growing trend in rural areas."

This is not exclusive to the Central Valley. Brandy Swain, Rural Crime Specialist with the San Luis Obispo County Sheriff's Department, noted that a recent theft of a solar panel off an area of highway 166 prompted an investigation. Thieves cut the wires that hold the panels.

According to the *Ag Alert* article, security motion cameras are one means of detecting trespassers. This type of theft will probably continue as long as panels are not secured in some way. Checking with your local security companies could give you an edge over the thief.

It is important to document any crime to your property or equipment and report it to the Sheriff's Department immediately. Helpful to the recovery of any property is the OAN or owner-applied number to farm machinery, equipment and household goods. The "Operation ID/Owner Applied Number" program is a nationwide program administered by the California Sheriff's Association and adopted by the California Highway Patrol, Far West Equipment Dealers Association and

California Farm Bureau (see sidebar on page 9).

Marking equipment with identification numbers, taking extra time to lock up machinery at night and installing surveillance equipment have become a part of the way agriculturalists protect their businesses. When a crime is committed, these steps help law enforcement in the recovery of property and the arrest and conviction of the individual(s) responsible.

The act of stealing—the wrongful taking and carrying away of the personal goods or property of another—this larceny, needs a watchful eye from the rural residential farmer and rancher. With the Rural Crime Prevention Task Force in place, the officers serving the county are readily available to help in the capture and prosecution of the criminal. For the last several years San Luis Obispo County has been fortunate to have continuous experience in the field.

Rural Crime Prevention Task Force

A native of Dallas, Texas, **Brandy Swain** is the Rural Crime Prevention Specialist. Raised in Orange County, she attended California State University Fullerton and holds a B.A. in Sociology with an emphasis in criminal justice. Her specialized training includes certification in Law Enforcement Communications, Basic Crime Prevention and Rural Crime Prevention techniques. Swain works directly with farming and ranching interests and may be reached at (805) 781-4578 or bswain@co.slo.ca.us.

Sargeant Rex Reece is in charge of the Crime Prevention/Public Information Unit and Rural Crime Task Force. Reece has been with the San Luis Obispo County Sheriff's Department 25 years, serving as a North County deputy, field training officer and supervising the Special Operations section.

Deputy Darren Davidson brings more than 20 years of law enforcement experience to the unit



Article author Mary Silveira and Deputy Ed Bryant visit a local ranch.

and has a 4H, FFA and team-roping background. As part of the Special Enforcement Detail, he is one of the team's accomplished marksmen. Davidson is a graduate of the Rural Crime Prevention School.

Rob Bryn is the Public Information Officer and Crime Prevention Specialist, having served several years with the San Luis Obispo Police Department. Bryn is responsible for working with local media to enhance their understanding of law enforcement's role in the county and to assist them in providing story ideas that warn the community about crime trends.

Deputy Pete Cramer, with the San Luis County Sheriff's Department since 1998, has been trained by the Western States Livestock Investigators Association, and has specialized training in illegal animal fighting, rural crime, domestic violence, active shooter and other advanced law enforcement training. Cramer also has a cattle operation of his own and understands the importance of maintaining the lines of communication among that specialized community. He is assigned to the coastal areas of the county.

Deputy Ed Bryant started his law enforcement career with the City of Morro Bay Police and transferred to the San Luis Obispo Sheriff's Department in the 1980s. Bryant has a wide range of law enforcement experience and training in mobile field force, narcotics, rural crime prevention, less-lethal munitions and is an expert in horses for the unit. He maintains his office at the Templeton Sheriff's station.

Marsha Mann, on the Task Force as part of the Rural Crime Prevention Grant, has more than 10 years crime prevention and law enforcement experience, most recently with the Fresno and San Diego Sheriff's



The rural eastside of California Valley and Carissa Plains is one of the county's most remote areas.

departments. Mann has expertise in crime-free multi-family housing, crime prevention through environmental design and crime prevention survey work. She also assists with the Rural Crime Task Force and participates in Farm/Ranch Watch activities.

Prevention is what we would all like to be able to do when it comes to crime. Briefly, some of the ways cited in the recent *Ag Alert* article for securing and preventing solar panel loss include the following:

- Map the panels with serial numbers
- Use locking bolts to secure solar panels
- Place tamper-evident stickers with the owner's name on all panels
- Use alarms on solar panels
- Use security cameras to cover your solar fields
- Place a fence around the panel system
- Contact law enforcement agencies immediately to report any suspicious people or vehicles.

Beyond solar panels, there has been a rash of burglaries in the South County area (November 2009), where victims have had sheds and sea trains invaded and grinders, generators and hand tools taken. The thieves have

used a wheelbarrow to cart items to a waiting car, then left the barrow on the side of the road. These pre-planned raids have left a trail that will help the officers' track and, it is hoped, apprehend the suspects.

The act of policing communities has changed over the years. With the help of programs such as the Rural Crime Task Force and funding that our state and county allow, a customer-service philosophy has transformed these agencies into more responsive and cooperative entities.

The Task Force also is alert to livestock that manage to get on the roadways and become potentially dangerous to motorists. Finding and working with a rancher to assist in returning the animal to the ranch and preventing disaster is a constant job. When vandals trespass onto farm and ranch land, they are likely to cut fences, which allow livestock out.

A recent call to the Farm Bureau prompted a local police unit to help get a cow and calves back where they belonged off an urban road. The Task Force is not the only policing force that watches out for the farmer and rancher. The Central Coast is urban and rural, side by side.

Portions excerpted from January 2008 Farmer & Rancher Magazine.

Four SLO Farm Bureau Tours Set for 2010

Southern Charm

features Charleston, Savannah & Jekyll Island



Highlights

- Historic Charleston
- Boone Hall Plantation—has grown crops for 320 years
- Beaufort
- Savannah—includes southern cuisine at famous Mrs. Wilkes' Dining Room
- Factors Walk
- Jekyll Island—two-night stay at Jekyll Island Club
- St. Simons Island

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- Dutton Family Theatre—featured on TV's *America's Got Talent*
- Twelve Irish Tenors
- Yakov Smirnoff
- Shoji Tabuchi—magnificent show in palatial theater
- Doug Gabriel Show
- SIX

Departure Dates:

April 8; May 21; June 11;
September 17; October 8

6 Days • 8 Meals

Starting at \$1,049 per person
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Highlights

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Departure Dates:

May 21; July 9;
September 10, 17;
October 1; November 5

12 Days • 25 Meals

Starting at \$1,599 per person
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Blakeslee: California Deficit continued from page 6

- Reducing the number of bills that lawmakers can introduce each year so that the Legislature focuses on the most important of state priorities;
- Elevating the importance of sub-committees, rather than having major decisions made by the "Big 5"; and
- Combining legislative panels that have similar duties to reduce duplication and inefficiency.

California can't afford to miss an opportunity to overhaul state government because the process is dominated by opportunists wanting to eliminate or weaken hard-fought taxpayer protections; there are special interests and others out there who view any reform movement as an opportunity to make it easier to defy the will of the people and increase taxes and spending.


Specifically, if they are to be effective, true reform proposals must do the following: preserve taxpayer protections, including the two-thirds majority vote

needed to raise taxes and pass a budget; protect the right of the people to take back their government at the ballot box through the initiative and referendum process if and when lawmakers fail to act; and ensure that elected officials remain true representatives of the people and that effective term limits placed on lawmakers are not repealed or weakened.


I hope that my fellow legislators will work with me to solve this problem quickly, because the sooner we can implement the necessary reforms, the sooner we can realize the benefits.

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