

The Carmel Pine Cone

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PBF&W starts with a toast and a tee



This year's edition of the Pebble Beach Food & Wine festival is bigger than ever, with more than 100 chefs and 250 wineries participating over four days. Thursday morning, the event kicked off with a shotgun golf tournament at Pebble Beach. With plenty of champagne, caviar, smoothies and other goodies available to put them in a good mood, celebrities such as Iron Chef Masaharo Miromoto (above left) and Daniel Boulud (right) got ready to hit the links. Before they did (above right, from left), Pebble Beach Co. President Cody Plott, PBF&W co-founder David Bernahl and Moët Hennessy Vice President Tex McCarthy offered a toast. Among the highlights of the weekend are the two Grand Tastings, along with numerous lunches, dinners, seminars, cooking demonstrations and after-hours parties. For tickets and more info, go to www.pebblebeachfoodandwine.com.



PHOTOS/PAUL MILLER

Sanctuary: Caltrans can push landslide debris over the edge

■ Emergency permit will get highway open sooner

By CHRIS COUNTS

THE EFFORT to clear a massive slide from Highway 1 near Alder Creek in Big Sur received an unexpected boost this week when the California Coastal Commission issued an emergency permit April 26 allowing workers to push a large portion of the debris over the edge instead of trucking it to disposal sites as far as four miles away.

The California Department of Transportation, meanwhile, is taking an aggressive approach to dealing with the slide, which has blocked access south of Big Sur since April 14. Six pieces of heavy equipment were transported by helicopter Tuesday to the top of the slide, which according to Caltrans spokeswoman Susana Cruz is about 200 feet above the pavement. It is estimated that the highway could be cleared within four weeks.

Letting gravity do the work

For years, environmental regulations have required that slide debris in Big Sur not be pushed over the edge to the ocean below, even though that's where the debris would have gone if the road hadn't stopped it. But the permit granted this week recognizes that "an emergency exists that requires action more quickly than permitted by the procedures for administrative or ordinary coastal permits."

Before the permit was issued, debris was required to be trucked to nearby disposal sites, in large part because environmentalists worry it will harm life in the Monterey Bay marine sanctuary. But a Big Sur business

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Water group won't give Cal Am appraisal to MPWMD

■ Stalemate in effort to meet with board

By KELLY NIX

A GROUP calling for the takeover of California American Water has refused to give the Monterey Peninsula Water Management District an appraisal it claims shows Cal Am's worth, raising questions about the future of the group's efforts.

Water Plus announced in January it wanted Cal Am to be acquired and turned into a public entity. The group — which launched a petition drive for the effort — also called for the replacement of the MPWMD with another government agency.

Since then, Water Plus has dropped its petition drive and now wants the MPWMD to stay in business and use eminent domain to acquire Cal Am, which it says is worth a little more than \$100 million.

Cal Am says it's not for sale.

Though MPWMD chairman Bob Brower told The

Pine Cone the water board is open to setting up a workshop with Water Plus about its takeover bid, Brower said so far Weitzman hasn't provided him with the appraisal and has failed to answer other key questions about the group's efforts.

"I didn't get what I would call adequate responses," Brower said. "Nor did Weitzman supply the appraisal he claims to have."

Until Water Plus forks over the document showing Cal Am's worth and provides more information about the group's efforts, Brower said he won't arrange a meeting.

"As chair, it's my responsibility to the board members to be fully prepared before I call a special meeting," he said. "I would not expect anybody to do that to me as a board member."

Weitzman — whose increasingly embattled posture includes accusing The Pine Cone of misquoting him without being able to substantiate the claim — did not respond to questions submitted by the paper this week.

After Water Plus requested to meet with the MPWMD, Brower asked Weitzman to respond to 13 questions ranging from the group's estimation of Cal Am's worth and Water

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COASTAL PERMIT FEE FOR DESAL PLANT: \$250,000

By KELLY NIX

CALIFORNIA AMERICAN Water paid a staggering application fee of \$250,000 to the California Coastal Commission to try to get a permit to build a desalination plant and other facilities that make up the regional water project — money that, in the end, the commission may use to try to stop it.

In March, Cal Am sent the coastal commission a weighty 1,600-page application for the desal plant permit, along with

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Bergstrom: I can't afford to defend civil suit

By KELLY NIX

THE CARMEL doctor sentenced to prison in 2009 for raping a woman in his home can't afford an attorney to defend him against a \$5 million civil lawsuit filed by his victim, according to court documents.

In July 2009, Carl Bergstrom was convicted by a Monterey County jury of forcibly sodomizing a woman in his home on San Juan Road and was sentenced to seven years in prison. Shortly after his conviction, the victim, Jane Doe 1, filed a lawsuit against Bergstrom seeking compensatory and punitive damages.

But in court documents Bergstrom himself filed from

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Town's brain trust benefits PG&E

By MARY BROWNFIELD

AS ONE Carmel man steps in to run PG&E while outgoing CEO Peter Darbee leaves with his \$35 million retirement package at the end of the week, a Carmel city councilmember is receiving accolades for developing a plan to assuage smart-meter opponents while the rollout of the new technology continues.

Lee Cox, a retired telecom executive who has served on the PG&E board since 1996 and became lead director in 2004, is taking over as interim CEO of the utility on Sunday. He will temporarily run the company — which has been pilloried

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Police and fire top salary costs

By MARY BROWNFIELD

A FIRE captain and a police sergeant were the highest paid employees in the City of Carmel last year, according to records listing the salaries, overtime and benefits of every city worker, including the mayor and council members. In 2009, the police chief and the city administrator topped the list.

In 2010, taxpayers paid \$7,352,162.36 in salaries and benefits for public employees, including \$4,839,459.10 in pay, \$501,049.97 in overtime, \$1,917,800.73 in benefits and \$93,852.56 in payouts to public-safety employees who had to work on holidays.

Benefits include medical, dental, uniform pay, retirement contributions from the city and other income, according to city clerk Heidi Burch, who furnished the

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