San Luis Obispo County Department of Planning & Building

October 2015

The Planning Network

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The Planning and Building Department's Mission Statement:

Promoting the Wise Use of Land

Helping to Build Great Communities

PLANNING & BUILDING
COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO

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http://SLOPLANNING.ORG

Saving Energy in the Spookiest Part of Your Home

By: Paul Menconi, emPower Energy Coach

As we prepare for little ghouls and goblins who'll come to our doors this Halloween, it's important to remember that the true terrors may be lurking inside your home -- just overhead -- ready to suck you (and your wallet) dry.

It sounds like a cheesy black and white horror film plot, but in reality, your attic is one spooky place. Not because creatures of the night are lurking and waiting to sip on your blood, but because it's often an overlooked spot that could be sucking up your energy, and in turn, draining your wallet. But with some effort, it's more than possible to send these frights packing.

While providing free home energy visits through the County's emPower program to hundreds of Central Coast homes in the last year, we found that 80 percent of them have insufficient or improperly installed insulation in their attics, and sometimes none at all. It's an area of the home most tend to forget about. The heated air you're spending money on tends to move into that cooler attic space, where it's of no use to anyone, leaving your heater to play catch-up. In the summer, warm outdoor air will seep in from the attic and give your air conditioner plenty more to do.

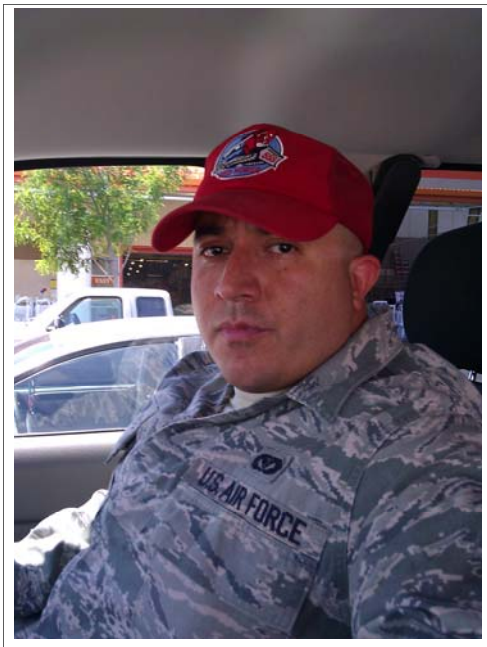
A great way to combat this year-round fright is to make sure you have the insulation you need. The symptoms of improper attic insulation are pretty easy to spot. Do you have hot or cold ceilings, walls or entire rooms? Maybe there are uneven temperatures throughout your home. For those brave enough to venture into the attic, take a look at the floor insulation levels. If you can see your wooden, attic floor joists rising above your insulation, you likely don't have enough. And if that's not terrifying enough, attics are common places to find cracks and crevices within the home – just another way for our valuable conditioned and heated air to escape. These air leaks have the same symptoms of inadequate insulation, but you'll also likely notice a good amount of dust that's coming into the home thanks to these little devils.

To battle these demons, you can pick up some supplies at the hardware store, such as insulation, caulk and cans of expanding

(Continued on page 2)

Meet the Staff — Jesus Barron

Every quarter, a different staff member will be featured.



My name is Jesus Barron, but everybody has always called me "Jesse" since I was a kid. I was born and raised in Bakersfield, California and went to West High School. I have two children, Anthony 20, and Alyssa 17. I enjoy lifting weights, hiking, marksmanship, and watching movies. I have been working for the Department of Planning and Building as a Building Inspector since July of 2014. Prior to that, I worked as a Building Inspector for Kern County for approximately 10 years.

I joined the Air Force right out of high school and went to Biloxi, Mississippi for technical training in my "chosen" vocation, "Structures" (Air Force for "Carpenters"). I was first assigned to Minot, North Dakota and spent two winters there. I escaped to the semi-less frigid, Misawa Air Base, Japan, where I spent nearly four years. I deployed a few times, but always in the rear with the gear (it is the Air Force after all), to Osan Korea, Okinawa, Japan and San Vito Dei Normanni, Italy. Deploying to an area differs from traveling, because deployments were often 120 days or more, one has more of a sense of the day to day life of the locals. I feel that these experiences were some of the best of my life, and I was fortunate enough to have been able to pick up a little of the Japanese lingo.

I graduated from The Community College of the Air Force with an Associate's Degree in Construction Technology. I found that I liked school, so I used my GI Bill and graduated from California State University, Bakersfield in 2008 with a Bachelor's Degree in Public Administration, and I am currently pursuing a Master's Degree in Public Administration.

After I separated from the Air Force, a fortuitous turn of events took me into the home building Industry. During the early 2000's, I worked with a few different builders in the Bakersfield area. Building inspection seemed like a natural evolution, so here I am.

Saving Energy … (*continued from page 1*)

spray foam insulation. Hardware store staff will have plenty of advice for the do-it-yourselfers out there. Of course, the emPower San Luis Obispo County program is also here to help. Give us a call (805) 781-5625 for a **free** home assessment and we'll send over an energy coach to take a look at your insulation and air sealing, as well as any other home energy-efficiency troubles.

If we find issues, we're happy to recommend a local, qualified contractor. A professional contractor will help ensure everything is done correctly and save you as much energy as possible. Connecting through emPower also gives qualifying homeowners access to home energy incentives and rebates. While you'll be able to seal some of the cracks and crevices yourself, a contractor will be able to seal even the ones you can't see and make sure your insulation is exactly what you need and fitted properly.

As spooky as it may seem, putting some time into these horrors now is going to serve you all year round. It'll be one less nuisance on your mind when those pint-sized zombies come knocking on your door this October 31st.

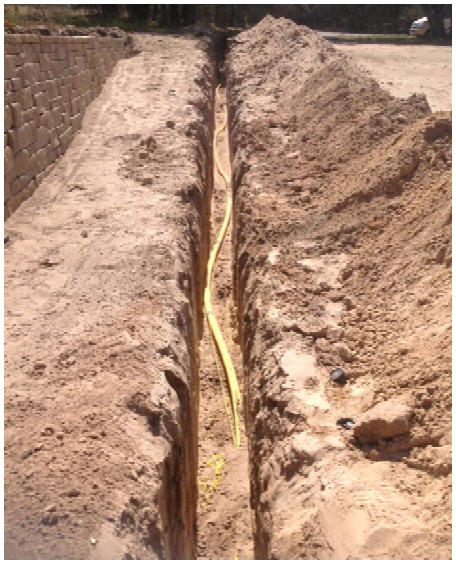
emPower Central Coast

October 5th-9th is Rideshare Week Across SLO County

The San Luis Obispo Council of Government's Regional Rideshare Program is challenging commuters to consider how their commute choices impact their health, their pocketbook and our region by making a smart commute choice. Visit letsgetvisible to find out more about the movement. To learn more about Rideshare Week or to get involved, call 511 or visit rideshare.

Inspection Tips—Exterior Gas Pipes

By David R. Rose



This month's article discusses the installation of exterior gas lines. Medium density polyethylene yellow gas pipes are the preferred natural gas underground distribution piping product of choice with over 90% usage in North America today. Polyethylene gas pipes are lightweight, not subject to corrosion, cost less to install and maintain than steel pipe. It conveniently comes in coil lengths and is easy to install by saddle fusion, butt fusion, electrofusion or by mechanical fittings. Certification to install fittings can be done by completing a workshop class. While a chemical stabilizer is built into polyethylene pipe to guard against ultraviolet direct sunlight degradation damage prior to installation underground, this type of pipe can only be installed underground. It is the same type of pipe our local gas utility company has been using since the late 1960's or early 1970's and is typically found under most residential streets.

Once a narrow trench has been dug into the ground at least 18 inches below grade, polyethylene pipe is ready to be installed directly alongside an 18-gauge tracer wire for future locating of the gas line once backfilled. Backfill material ideally should be sand approximately 4 inches below the pipe and approximately 4 inches above the pipe. Suitable native material should be placed on top of the sand. Any sharp objects such as hard rock or metal touching the pipe will spell trouble in the future...dangerous trouble!! Polyethylene pipe will fail under this situation and begin to leak gas underground. It might take a few months or it might take a few years, but it will leak.

When the exterior gas line has been installed and backfilled, a pressure test of 10 pounds per square inch for the entire length of the line is all that remains for approval by your building inspector. If the above mentioned gas line is going to your new outdoor barbecue center, it's now time to grill up that New York steak... I'll have mine medium well, thank you!!

The exterior gas line inspection request is #452 when requesting via the Internet www.sloplanning.org/inspections or follow the prompts on the phone @ 788-2076.

Continuum of Care – Annual Progress Report

By Ivana Yeung

The Continuum of Care Program is designed to promote community-wide commitment to ending homelessness by focusing on quickly rehousing homeless individuals and families and optimizing self-sufficiency. At the end of each program year, significant performance measures achieved by funded Continuum of Care projects are submitted to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in an Annual Progress Report.

Two Annual Progress Reports were submitted to HUD in August to close out the successful Program Year 2014-2015 for the following projects:

- The South County Supportive Services Project through Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo (CAPSLO), served 216 individuals from the southern portion of the County through case management services. The case managers worked with clients to develop case plans and goals. Notable achievements include: 51% of individuals leaving the program exited into permanent housing; 84% of the individuals that exited the program have at least one source of cash income.

- The SLO City Project administered by CAPSLO and Transitions Mental Health Association (TMHA), provides 20 transitional housing beds and comprehensive case management/ supportive services for the homeless, many of which are classified as chronically homeless, mentally ill, and disabled. The project served 182 individuals, and 49% of the individuals that exited the program successfully obtained permanent housing. If you have questions or want more information, contact Ivana Yeung at iyeung@co.slo.ca.us.

Community Workshops – Draft Fair Housing Plan!

By Ted Bench

San Luis Obispo County and its partner cities receive a yearly allotment of funds from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development. The funds are used to support affordable housing, public improvements, and homeless prevention services. Pursuant to the Civil Rights Act, local agencies that use HUD funds must have a five-year Fair Housing Plan (formally called the "2015-2020 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice / Fair Housing Plan"). The County hired an experienced civil rights law firm to prepare the draft Fair Housing Plan. Local agencies and stakeholders were consulted during preparation of the draft Fair Housing Plan.

Fortunately, our communities do not face the same issues as cities with segregated urban cores. However, this is a high-cost housing area, and the primary impediment to fair housing choice is the lack of affordable housing. The draft Fair Housing Plan recommends the County and its partner cities should take steps to expand fair housing services, encourage affordable housing development, and ask the state legislature to support affordable housing legislation.

A 40-day public comment period for the draft Plan is currently underway, running from August 17, 2015, through September 25, 2015. The draft Fair Housing Plan has been posted on the website of the County Department of Planning and Building at: www.sloplanning.org. Go directly to this link: 2016 Grant Funds Available and Draft Fair Housing Plan to read more about it.

On November 3, 2015 the Fair Housing Plan will be presented to the Board of Supervisors for consideration and adoption.

If you have questions or comments do not hesitate to contact County Planning staff – Ted Bench 805-781-5701 tbench@co.slo.ca.us.

Cash for Grass: Turf Replacement Rebates Available Statewide

By Cheryl Cochran

If you've been waiting for the right time to replace a thirsty lawn with low water use landscaping, now may be the most lucrative. In August, the Department of Water Resources announced a statewide program to offer rebates of $2 per square foot for up to 1000 square feet for eligible homeowners. The program was developed in response to an executive order issued by Governor Brown to replace more than 50 million square feet of turf with drought tolerant landscapes.

Both living and dead turf are eligible, but the turf must still be in place at the time of application. Replacement landscaping must be low water use, drought-tolerant, or California native plants. Areas to be replaced with artificial turf are not eligible for a rebate. View a full list of eligibility criteria and apply online at www.saveourwaterrebates.com.

Turf removal incentives, or "Cash for Grass" programs, are also proposed as part of the Countywide Water Program, scheduled to be considered at a Board of Supervisors hearing on October 27th. The programs are proposed for the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin and the Nipomo Mesa Water Conservation Area (availability is dependent on funding). Residents in these areas may be eligible for both rebates, but could only receive a maximum of $2 per square foot. Contact Cheryl Cochran at (805) 781-1366 for more information.

Photo from slowaterwiselands

It May Be a Wet Winter, Be Prepared

By: Code Enforcement Staff

As we approach the rainy season that officially begins on October 15, we actually do need to make preparations. After four years of drought, we have forgotten what flooded streets and clogged storm drains look like, and stopped preparing for it.

With many of the weather predications pointing to a wet winter, possibly even a very wet winter, the homeowner should take precautions to help prevent costly damage to their property due to storm events.

Many homeowners have taken out their once green lawns and replaced them with hardscapes. Now, instead of storm water percolating into the ground, it runs off into the street. Others replaced lawns and thirsty landscape with native plants and wood mulch or bark. In a major storm, where the ground is saturated, this material will float and run off into the streets clogging overloaded storm drains. In an effort to mitigate against wildfires, many have denuded their hillsides or worse, tilled them, leaving loose soil to liquefy in heavy rains and create mudslides.

So what does the average homeowner do? Here are some tips:

- Create berms, water bars or drainage troughs to slow storm water runoff and direct it to suitable drainage basins. Partially filling drain ditches with leach or decorative rock slows down water and helps prevent scouring and erosion.
- Cover bare hillsides with straw that is punched into the soil or covered with jute or erosion control netting.
- If it is feasible, silt fencing properly placed may help in certain conditions, as do staked straw wattles and staked hay bales.
- Anticipate landscape bark floating and joining a stream. Create a permeable barrier around it so the bark is trapped and doesn't end up in the municipal storm water system.
- Make sure roof gutters are cleared of debris, and that drainage moves away from your house to the street or catch basin. Water ponding around your house will eventually cause damage.

These few tips are helpful to the average homeowner. But if you have a large property with hillsides, particularly if the slopes drain to your house, you may need professional assistance from a certified erosion control specialist, the Resource Conservation District, a civil engineer or even a professional landscaper who is experienced in erosion control.

For more or detailed information and assistance, your local Resource Conservation District websites have helpful information.
North County - http://www.us-ltrcd.org/
South County and Coast - http://www.coastalrcd.org/

Coastal Fast Fact Series:

Part 2: Appealable Development

By Schani Siong

Generally, California's coastal zone boundary extends inland only 1,000 yards. The coastal zone in SLO County is unique because it extends further inland in several areas due to the variety of important habitat, recreational, and agricultural resources. Any development that requires a discretionary review and permit approval is subject to the local government appeal process. Appeals to the Coastal Commission on local coastal development projects are limited to certain types of decisions.

I have a project in the Coastal Appealable Zone (CAZ). How is this different from the regular Coastal Zone?

The Coastal Zone comprises of approximately 7.5% of the total land area in SLO County, and only approximately 4% of the coastal zone is appealable to the Coastal Commission. This small portion of coastal zone appealable to the Commission is designated as the Coastal Appealable Zone (CAZ). Areas within the CAZ are typically more sensitive in nature and have special coastal attributes compared to the general areas in the Coastal Zone. For example, a majority of Cayucos residential areas west of Highway 1 fall within the CAZ designation due to their designation as Small Scale Neighborhoods. Many residential areas in Cambria are within CAZ because of the sensitive habitats for Monterey pines. Appeals on development located within the regular Coastal Zone are filed and heard at the local Board of Supervisors. If a development is located within the CAZ areas, it is further appealable to the California Coastal Commission.

What types of coastal development projects are appealable to the Coastal Commission?

The following types are appealable: Any locally-approved development project between the first public road and the sea; within 300 feet of a beach, mean high tide or bluff edge; within 100 feet of a wetland or stream; or on tidelands, submerged lands, or public trust lands; approval or denial of a major public works project or energy facility, regardless of its location in the Coastal Zone; development in areas with significant recreational and visitor serving value; highly scenic areas, archeological sites, special communities such as small scale neighborhoods or in areas that could impair public coastal access and in the County, any approval of a project that is not a principal-permitted use allowed under the certified Local Coastal Program (LCP) is also appealable to the Commission.

Who can appeal projects in the Coastal Zone?

Any applicant or person who participates in the County's permitting process for a project, or who otherwise communicates their concerns to the County Planning Department, may file an appeal. Appellants must exhaust all local appeals before appealing to the Commission. Any two Coastal Commissioners may also appeal projects to the Commission. However, Coastal Commissioners can only appeal projects within the CAZ areas.

Hearing Scheduled for Proposed Water Amendments

By: Cheryl Cochran

Public Hearing October 27th

Photo Credit: www.flickr.com/photos/a75/

On October 27th, the Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing to consider multiple water related amendments to the County Code. If adopted, the proposed amendments would mostly affect the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (PRGWB) and the Nipomo Mesa Water Conservation Area (NMWCA), but some amendments would have Countywide implications. The hearing comes following an 18-month outreach process that culminated in a series of five study sessions\hearings by the Planning Commission. At the hearing on August 13th, the Planning Commission voted to recommend that the Board adopt a package of amendments. The recommended language can be accessed online at: www.slocounty.ca.gov/planning/water-amendments/County_General_Plan_and_County_Code_Amendments.htm. The hearing on October 27th will take place during the regularly scheduled Board meeting and will include opportunities for public comment. Proposed requirements by geographic area are summarized below.

Paso Robles Groundwater Basin – Water Neutral New Development and Agriculture

The proposed amendments would require that all new development and new irrigated agriculture in the PRGWB offset proposed water use. Property owners could apply for an Agricultural Offset Clearance to show that new planting would not result in increased water use if existing crops are either removed or replaced with a crop that uses less water. New buildings would be required to offset water use before building permit issuance. Applicants for new development could purchase credits from County-run water conservation programs, which would save water through plumbing retrofits and turf removal. Water meters would be required for new wells in the PRGWB. The Paso Robles Groundwater Basin Urgency Ordinance required similar provisions from August 27, 2013, through August 26th, 2015. As proposed, the amendments would be effective until a groundwater sustainability plan is adopted by a groundwater sustainability agency for the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin.

The Nipomo Mesa Water Conservation Area – Water Neutral New Development

As recommended by the Planning Commission, proposed amendments would require that all new development in the NMWCA offset water use. Applicants could purchase credits through a proposed County-run water conservation program that would save water through removal of existing turf. Water meters would be required on any new well in the NMWCA.

Countywide – Water Waste Prevention

The proposed amendments include Water Waste Prevention requirements that would affect all unincorporated areas of the County that do not already have a similar program enforced by a water purveyor. Prohibited activities include watering established landscaping more than three times per week and using a hose without a shutoff nozzle to wash vehicles.

Countywide – Agricultural Water Waste Prevention

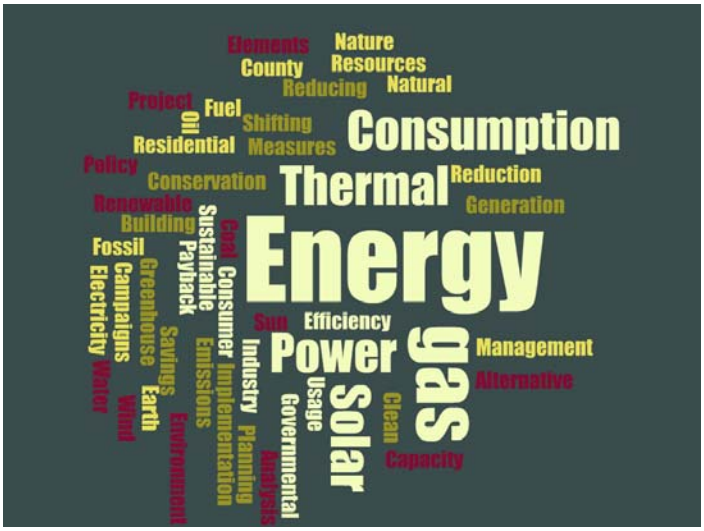
Also proposed is the expansion of existing policies in the Agriculture Element of the County's General Plan, which would encourage Best Management Practices for efficient agricultural water use. The amendments also call for implementation of an educational outreach program.

The proposed amendments would require changes to Title 19, Title 22, and Title 8 of the County Code, and the Agriculture and Conservation and Open Space Elements of the County's General Plan. An introduction, or first reading, of the proposed amendments will take place at the Board of Supervisor's meeting on October 6th. Interested parties are welcome attend both meetings, but the hearing on October 27th will include a staff presentation, public comment, and Board deliberation.

CSD Energy Management Program

By: Jon Griesser & Paul Donegan

As part of its *CSD Energy Management Program*, Energy Watch is in the process of presenting results from Large Integrated Audits (LIA) to nine participating CSDs (Avila Beach, Port San Luis Harbor District, Nipomo, Templeton, San Miguel, Cambria, Cayucos, Los Osos, and San Simeon) in SLO County. LIAs are free and comprehensive energy assessments that result in a detailed report and energy action plan with prioritized recommendations for reducing energy use, demand, and cost, and decreasing greenhouse gas emissions. The reports' detailed recommendations provide CSDs with projected implementation costs of energy efficiency, load management, demand response, and distributed generation measures, along with anticipated energy and cost savings, simple payback, and potential incentives available. To support implementation of these recommended projects, Energy Watch will be providing free technical, engineering, and project management support, including grant and low-interest loan information and assistance with incentive and financing applications.



In total, the LIA reports identify over $8.6 million in measures that would reduce annual peak energy demand by 1,114 kW and 4,605,882 kWh, while reducing CO2 emissions by over 1,300 Tons per year with annual cost savings of approximately $1 million. Energy efficiency measures alone account for almost $2 million in projects, over $286,000 in annual savings, reduction of energy use by 272kW and 1,702,000 kWh per year, and 490 fewer Tons of CO2 emitted annually. Energy efficiency projects range from replacing inefficient lighting to installing more efficient pumps, motors, and water treatment equipment at CSD facilities. Load management – which refers to shifting energy consumption to off-peak hours when possible – suggests inexpensive measures like pumping water and running equipment during periods of the day and year that energy prices are lower. Demand response measures are included to identify methods of reducing energy consumption during rare peak demand days when the energy supply for California is expected to be strained. Finally, distributed generation measures – which account for the bulk of the overall cost, energy savings, and emissions reduction – identify solar system projects that would offset the need for purchasing as much energy from the grid while providing clean energy.

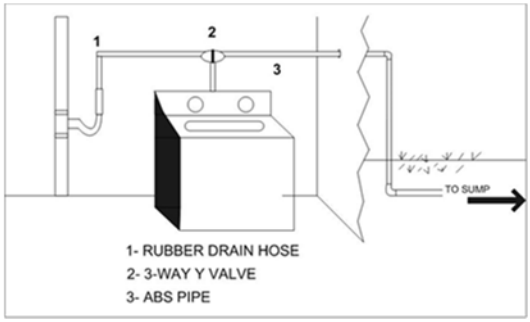
Quick Greywater Fix for the Drought

By Barry Tolle

As we all know, the current drought has lasted for the last five years. We all hope El Nino will bring lots of rain in the winter, but even if that happens, the decrease in ground water, lakes and streams, will take more than one year to recover. This is a great time for you to do your part toward creating a more sustainable landscape. A landscape partially irrigated by greywater. Below I will show you an easy greywater conversion for your washing machine, it is easy, does not require a permit, and will give you a chance to reuse your wash water to maintain your garden.

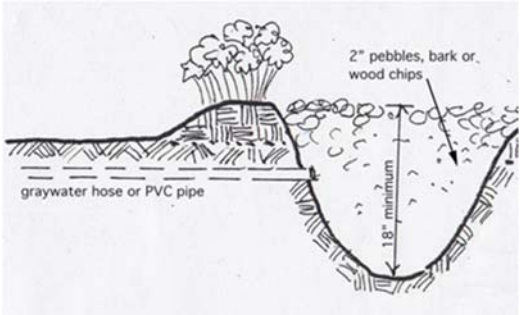
Step one:

Add a three-way valve to the washing machine drain line, and add plastic pipe to one side of the valve to lead to the outside of the house.



Step two: Create mulch basins in areas where plants are located.

Step three: connect new drain pipe from washing machine to irrigation pipes that connect to mulch basins.



Step four: Enjoy your garden!

During the winter, with less sunlight and more rain, you should switch your washing machine back to the regular house sewer from time to time. Just check your garden for signs of overwatering. Also, wash water is basic so plant selection should not include acid-loving plants.

For further information about Greywater please visit:
http://www.slogreenbuild.org/#!at-guides/cile

Upcoming Events…

Oct 2015—Cambria Scarecrow Festival http://www.cambriascarecrows.com/
Oct 5th—9th is Rideshare Week www.rideshare.org for more information and events
Oct 6, 2015— Introduction of Countywide Water Amendments at Board of Superv. meeting
Oct 14, 2015—LA District Regulatory Division presents the latest final rule defining waters of the U. S. at 11:30-1:30 at SLO Library. Non-members $25 Lunch Provided. RSVP: kmiller@terraverdeweb.com
Oct 27, 2015—Hearing on Countywide Water Amendments at Board of Superv. meeting
Nov 3, 2015 - Hearing on the Fair Housing Plan at Board of Superv. meeting
Nov 6, 2105—CEQA Essentials Workshop. 8:00-4:30, SLO Library Community Room. Info at http://califaep.org/workshops/ceqa-essentials-workshops.
Nov 10, 2015—Amendments to the 2015 Action/Consolidated Plan (reallocation of HUD funds) at Board of Superv. meeting
Nov 17, 2015—Hearing on Adjustments to the Title 29 Fee Schedules (In-Lieu & affordable housing fees) at Board of Superv. meeting

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Customer Survey

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Are You Prepared for the Winter Months?

Now that Fall is officially here, it's time to prepare your home for cold weather. These steps, most of which you can do yourself, will help lower your utility bills and protect your investment.

- Have your furnace inspected to be sure the system is clean, in good repair and can achieve its manufacturer-rated efficiency.
- If your ceiling fan has a reverse switch, use it to run the fan's blades in a clockwise direction once you start using your heat. Energy Star says the fan will produce an updraft and push down into the room heated air from the ceiling (remember, hot air rises). This is especially helpful in rooms with high ceilings -- and it might even allow you to turn down your thermostat by a degree or two for greater energy savings.
- Add weather stripping as needed around doors, making sure you cannot see any daylight from inside your home. If the gaps between siding and window or door frames are bigger than the width of a nickel, you need to reapply exterior caulk. (Check the joints in window and door frames, too.) Silicone caulk is best for exterior use because it won't shrink and it's impervious to the elements.
- Clean your gutters! If your gutters are full of debris, water can back up against the house and damage roofing, siding and wood trim -- plus it can cause leaks and sometimes ice dams.
- Divert water by adding extensions to downspouts so that water runs at least 3 to 4 feet away from the foundation.
- Turn off exterior faucets. Undrained water in pipes can freeze, which will cause pipes to burst as the ice expands. Start by disconnecting all garden hoses and draining the water that remains in faucets. If you don't have frost-proof faucets (homes more than ten to 15 years old typically do not), turn off the shut-off valve inside your home.
- Don't prune trees or shrubs until late-winter. You may be tempted to get out the pruning shears after the leaves fall, when you can first see the underlying structure of the plant. But horticulturalists advise waiting to prune until late-winter for most plants, when they've been long dormant and just before spring growth begins. To get advice specific to your plants and region, consult master gardeners at local nurseries. One exception: You may need to hire an arborist to remove deadfall or trim limbs close to your home or power lines that could cause problems in a winter storm.
- Call a chimney sweep. Before you burn the Yule log, make sure your fireplace (or any heating appliance burning gas, oil, wood or coal), chimney and vents are clean and in good repair. That will prevent chimney fires and prevent carbon monoxide from creeping into your home.