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PFEIFFER CREEK BRIDGE CRACKS AND MAY FAIL

By CHRIS COUNTS

A CONCRETE bridge that spans a small creek located just south of Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park is leaning and has cracks in its support columns. With more wet weather on the way, Caltrans officials are closing it until at least early next week — and possibly much longer — because they are worried the bridge could collapse.

The highway leading to the bridge is also slumping and has developed major cracks in the pavement.

The trouble at the bridge extends the closure of Highway 1 from Ragged Point north for 47 miles, although some

access for locals is available if they're traveling from the south.

After cracks in the bridge were discovered Feb. 11, locals were allowed to intermittently drive or walk across it with an escort. But that changed Feb. 15 when an inspection revealed even more movement and growth in fractures.

On Wednesday, Stan Russell of the Big Sur Chamber of Commerce sent out an ominous message to residents and businesses that the bridge would be closed indefinitely at 5 p.m. There's also an active slide at the site, which is located

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PHOTOS/MICHAEL TROUTMAN, DMT IMAGING (ABOVE), CALTRANS (RIGHT)

A large crack in the pavement (above) shows a section of Highway 1 near Pfeiffer Creek Bridge that is beginning to fail. Beneath the bridge itself, numerous fractures in the support columns (right) raise concerns it will collapse.



'Pipe to nowhere' will lead somewhere, county says

By CHRIS COUNTS

IN A letter that was widely circulated last week, the Carmel Valley Association sounded the alarm over the installation of an 84-inch pipe that is part of the Rancho Cañada housing project, calling it the "flood pipe to nowhere" and part of a larger project that may never be built.

Before the subdivision was approved by supervisors Dec. 14, one of its chief selling points was the inclusion of flood control measures that would benefit nearby residents. But the letter implies that the public was misled about those benefits.

Couple says rental house was a scam

By KELLY NIX

THE SHERIFF'S office has asked the district attorney to issue an arrest warrant for a Carmel man who is accused of bilking a couple out of \$3,000 by advertising a home for rent on Craigslist, cashing their deposit check, then suddenly telling them they couldn't move in.

Monterey County Sheriff's Deputy Dan Mitchell said he's asked the D.A. to authorize the arrest of Chris Moffa, who Amy Stouffer claims promised her and her partner, Soerke Peters, they could move in to the rental property, but then reneged on the contract, leaving them hanging.

"Our house is packed, movers have been paid," Stouffer told The Pine Cone. "It's just a disaster."

But in an email message to The Pine Cone Thursday, Moffa said, "The allegations are false. I'll be deferring to my attorney and he will contact you at the appropriate time to make a comment."

Stouffer said the saga began when they saw an ad on Craigslist for a house for rent on Guadalupe Street, not far from where they live now. The two-bedroom, one-bath house, described as "cozy," was offered for \$2,700 per month.

After email exchanges and an in-person meeting with

In response, county planning official Carl Holm this week confirmed to The Pine Cone the pipe could help prevent flooding in neighborhoods located near the proposed subdivision. While the larger flood control project "hasn't been fully designed or funded," Holm insisted it is "moving forward," and what the CVA called a "pipe to nowhere" is no such thing.

Signed by Carmel Valley Association members Eric Sand and Tim Sanders, the letter was sent out Feb. 2 — three weeks after the Carmel Valley Association sued Monterey County and developer Alan Williams to try to overturn Monterey County's Dec. 14 approval of the Rancho Cañada project.

A fire road that will be extended and raised to help control floods

In the letter, Sand and Sanders asserted that the flood pipe, besides being pointless, would be Rancho Cañada's "main contribution to flood control."

But Williams said the most important part of his flood control strategy is not the pipe, but a plan to extend and raise a fire road on the property.

Williams called the pipe "a minor component" of the overall flood control effort. He said county officials asked him if he would be willing to run an 84-inch pipe across his property to drain water that comes from the north side of Carmel Valley Road, passes under the pavement, and follows the western border of Carmel Middle School for a short distance before spilling into an agricultural field.

Sand and Sanders suggested the Rancho Cañada subdivision wouldn't be possible without the pipe. But Williams said the water that the pipe would drain currently bypasses his property — and therefore isn't his responsibility to deal with. But he's agreed to bury the pipe through his land so it can drain into the Carmel River because, "I want to be a good neighbor," and "it's the right thing to do," he said.

See **RENTAL** page 9A

See **PIPE** page 13A

Supes call for sheriff to protect immigrants, including criminals

■ Nonbinding resolution declares MoCo a 'welcoming county'

By KELLY NIX

THE MONTEREY County Board of Supervisors — during a heated and emotional meeting Tuesday morning — approved a resolution urging the Monterey County sheriff not to cooperate with federal immigration authorities in any effort to deport immigrants who are in the country illegally, including those who have been convicted of serious crimes.

The resolution adopted by supervisors designates Monterey County as a "welcoming county for immigrants and refugees" and declares the county "a place of trust and safety for local immigrants." But at the core of the supervisors' three-page document is an appeal to the sheriff and other officials to not use any county resources to enforce federal immigration law or cooperate with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

The resolution — the second the supervisors have passed in response to President Donald Trump's stance on illegal immigrants and refugees — also asks that the Monterey County District Attorney's Office "consider the avoidance of adverse immigration consequences" in plea negotiations with non-citizens charged with crimes.

"We want to send a clear message that we will support [immigrants] through this very turbulent time," District 3 Supervisor Simon Salinas, who supported the resolution, said at the meeting.

Fifth District Supervisor Mary Adams didn't comment on the substance of the resolution, but supported it, while District 2 Supervisor John Phillips — a former Monterey County Superior Court judge — voted against it.

The meeting, which drew jeers, applause and outbursts, prompted Adams, who was elected in November, to say, "This is the most unruly group I've had."

A warning from the sheriff

The supervisors' resolution, though, drew a warning from Monterey County Sheriff Steve Bernal over a paragraph requesting that "no county resources be used to assist in the enforcement of federal immigration law or to gather or dis-

See **IMMIGRANTS** page 15A

Will the real Bill Murray please stand up?



PHOTO/MANNY ESPINOZA

He's conquered comedy, film and golf, and now Bill Murray has taken on the world of fine art — not as a painter or sculptor, but as the subject. See page 21A.