



## FALLBROOK REVITALIZATION ADVISORY COUNCIL



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### **FEBRUARY'S FEATURED PROGRAM:**

#### *Community Revitalization and Fallbrook Public Education*

Presented by Dr. Brian Jacobs, superintendent of the **Fallbrook Union Elementary School District**, and Sheryl Gonda with the **Fallbrook Education Foundation**

So goes the educational system in Fallbrook, so goes the community. That was the message delivered by Sheryl Gonda with the newly created Fallbrook Education Foundation and Dr. Brian Jacobs, superintendent of the Fallbrook Union Elementary School District and its nine schools. The pair said education is about more than just grades and school lunches. Education and the quality of schools often reflect the core values, image and assets of a community. Despite all the bad news coming out of Washington and Sacramento, budget cutbacks and misleading standardized test scores, Fallbrook and its school system have a good story to tell, explained Gonda, who is helping to create a foundation that will help support public schools in the community. Although Fallbrook suffers from the misperception that it has low standardized test scores, its high-performing students get lost in the shuffle. Many of these students end up going to the finest colleges in the land, Jacobs said – Berkeley, Stanford, UC Davis, Harvard and Yale. The pair said some Fallbrook schools ranks favorably against surrounding school districts in Bonsall, Temecula and Poway. But as an agriculture community that is transitioning to a bedroom community, the people of Fallbrook need to pay closer attention to the socio-economic impact schools have on the community. A strong housing market depends on quality schools, Gonda said. Companies and executives looking to expand or relocate often use district test scores and other measures of quality of life to make a decision. Gonda said it is up to the community to determine if its school system is an asset or liability. She pointed out a scary statistic that third grade literacy is a predictor of prison growth. In other words, low literacy rates early on mean a larger inmate population. Key to a school district's success in this tough environment is community involvement and a local education foundation, like the one Gonda is trying to get off the ground. There are 70 such foundations

in San Diego County and about 600 in the state. New education foundations were recently started in Bonsall and Escondido and Gonda said Fallbrook needs one to better focus on enhanced education. "We want to grow great minds," Gonda said. Jacobs said with another 8 percent budget cutbacks looming, school programs for students are in jeopardy, such as the De Luz Program that teaches kids about the history of the community and Exploratorium at Potter Junior High School that teaches students about careers in a fun and exciting way. Jacobs said the foundation could play a critical role in helping to save these programs and get the word out to parents and the community that things are working well in Fallbrook classrooms. "This foundation can carry the message that people need to come and see what is taking place in our schools," he said. Jacobs pointed out that even though some schools in his district are not achieving federal standards, all schools are "meeting and exceeding state standards." Ultimately, the Fallbrook Education Foundation will focus on making sure education resources are going to the right place, enhance the reputation of Fallbrook schools, make sure the community invests in its schools in the while the federal/state mandate is "no child left behind" the foundation wants to ensure that students meeting state standards excel even more.

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## **OTHER REPORTS:**

### **Supervisor's Corner: *Ensuring Fair and Open Competition for County Contracts***

The San Diego County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a recommendation from Fifth District Supervisor Bill Horn to adopt an ordinance that bans Project Labor Agreements in county contracts beyond what the State and Federal government mandate.

A Project Labor Agreement, commonly referred to as a "PLA", is a pre-hire collective bargaining agreement to use union labor on a project. When required, it eliminates the ability for non-union companies and workers to compete for and work on, government projects. When required by Federal, State, or local governments, PLAs discriminate against approximately 85 percent of construction workers and reduce competition to only those contractors who use union labor.

Supervisor Horn said, "The people of our county expect us to guard taxpayer dollars and one way is to protect open competition for construction work on county contracts." Horn added, "Reducing competition for government contracts causes bids to come in higher, which drives up the cost to build government projects and squanders precious tax dollars. All qualified contractors and workers deserve the chance to compete for contracts and jobs that their own tax dollars pay for."

Supervisor Horn said, "This Board has been on the cutting edge of improving government services by increasing efficiency of county employees and using the private sector. I think we owe it to the taxpayers to formalize some of the practices we use to save the county millions."

In the last 12 months, the cities of San Diego, Chula Vista, Oceanside, and the County of Orange have all taken steps to reduce or eliminate requirements to use the PLA.

The ordinance requires a second reading on March 2 and would take effect 30 days later. The Board also directed the chief administrative officer to return to the Board in 180 days with a report on county contracting, competition and privatization including practices that could be formalized by policy, ordinance, or reconsideration for putting an initiative on the November ballot for voter approval.

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### ***New Library a Good Read***

The new library may be months away from opening but Fallbrook continues to be a book loving and reading community. Jerri Patchett with the Friends of Fallbrook Library reports that circulation in the downsized and temporary library on Main Street is up and sales at the Bottom Shelf used bookstore operated by the friends are doing well. "I guess people love being on Main Street," Patchett said. Steel beams for the new library are going up in early March and the library lovers soon will get a chance to see plantings that will go on the 4,000 square foot "green roof." Patchett also mentioned that the tile-making workshop at Fallbrook School of the Arts attracted hundreds of people who braved a downpour. "It was cool," she said. In other library news, Ceci Rincón, Fallbrook Library branch manager, introduced herself to the group and encouraged parent and kids to use the library. She also is looking for funding for a special library card that will be issued to all first graders in the community to make sure everyone knows about the assets and programs at the Fallbrook Library.

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### ***Water Situation Not Looking Good***

Despite all the recent rains Keith Lewinger, general manager of the **Fallbrook Public Utilities District**, said the region's water situation doesn't look good. The San Diego County Water Authority, which provides wholesale water to the FPUD, announced recently it was raising its rates by 20 percent. "That means we won't be able to hold water rates flat this year," he said. He also mentioned that the water

supply doesn't look good for 2010. That means the district will be in some manner of mandatory conservation this year as well. He expects the problem to persist as long as endangered species in the Delta not water supply continues to dominate water planning in Northern California, the source for much of the water supply in Southern California. On the bright side, he said the district qualified for a low interest loan to install a 1 megawatt solar panel station at a waste water treatment plant. The district will be able to borrow money at less than 3 percent to fund the project, which is expected to pay for itself in less than 20 years. "After 15 years it will be a money machine," he said.

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### ***Fireworks Fundraiser Halfway to Goal***

The **Fallbrook Beautification Alliance** is about halfway toward raising the \$25,000 it needs to save the annual July 4<sup>th</sup> fireworks show at the Grand Tradition. The event is the sole fundraiser for the group, which was responsible for planting live plants in the median of Mission Boulevard, the downtown flowerpots and is in the process of turning Beech Street Park into a children's art park. Over the last five years a generous donor provided the funds for the fireworks but this year the money dried up. So far the FBA has raised \$12,800 but needs to reach the \$25,000 by March 15. "Everyone in Fallbrook enjoys these fireworks," said Jerri Patchett with the FBA. "But no money, no fireworks." Without the event, she warned, there may be no FBA. Medians on Mission Road would be turned into concrete and Beech Street Park would go away, she added. To help out and save a great community event, go to <http://www.fallbrookbeautification.org> and make a donation. Last summer the 5th annual July 4th Celebration at the Grand Tradition attracted 2,500 people and raised an estimated \$30,000 for the Fallbrook Beautification Alliance.

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**Here and there** – Marlene Rantanen with **The Fallbrook Center for the Arts Group** said **Fallbrook Art Center** currently is hosting a World of Watercolor exhibit that runs through March 28. The exhibition accepted 29 original paintings from artists who have achieved signature status in one or more established Watercolor Associations in the US. It is being held in conjunction with the Signature American Watercolor Exhibition, the National Watercolor Society's annual Exhibition Travel Show, which will display 30 paintings. She also mentioned that new classes are kicking off at the **Fallbrook School of the Arts and Brandon Gallery** has new shows all the time... Anne Burdick with **Keep Fallbrook Clean and Green** talked about the battery recycling program and thanked Vince Ross and Don McDougal for their help in helping to organize the annual cleanup to be held on the fourth Saturday in September at the lot owned by Stater Bros next to The Grand Tradition... Judy Gillespie with the **Fallbrook Historical Society** said her group's historic registry program is moving forward as are plans for a celebratory party on March 6 in the afternoon at Village Square... Dale Mitchell with the **Fallbrook Union High School District** said dealing with financial challenges continues to be the hot topic in the district with a board decision

on what needs to be done expected in the next couple of weeks. He also said the board is working on a visionary concept of what 21<sup>st</sup> century learning will look like... Janice Bricker said the **Fallbrook Gem & Mineral Society** had a successful buying trip at the rock and mineral show in Tucson and said there are many new items in the group's gift shop... Gordon Stone with **San Diego County Parks Department** said the Fallbrook Community Center received a landscaping makeover and could be getting a new gymnasium. Artificial turf courtesy of an insurance settlement stemming from the Rice Fire was installed and the county is applying for a grant for a new gym at the center that would be funded from the estimated \$368 million available from the passage of California Proposition 84 in 2006... Dustin Steiner, who was recently promoted to deputy chief of staff for **San Diego County Supervisor Bill Horn**, said his boss is making plans to file papers for re-election. He invited the audience to attend the State of North County address on March 9 at AVO Playhouse in Vista at 10 a.m. He also mentioned that transfers and motherhood have caused a staff reshuffling... Chris Hasvold of **Coldwell Banker Landmark Group** spared the audience his informative charts and graphs but said he was "cautiously optimistic" about the ongoing real estate recovery... Budd Sutliff with the **Historic Downtown Merchants Association** said the first two months of 2010 were disappointing for Fallbrook shop keepers but stores are restocking their shelves with new merchandise. He also said a satellite of Dominic's Italian restaurant is expected to open in the former Lace Apron location in mid-March. Vince Ross also noted that a new wine tasting bar will be setting up shop in Jackson Square just off of Main Street... Steve Achard said the **Village Rotary of Fallbrook** is putting the finishing touches on a grant program for eight villages in Kenya. The club is also making plans for a luau fundraiser on June 5 that will definitely include a pig cooked underground in the traditional Hawaiian way...

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#### **THIS MONTH'S FEATURED PROGRAM:**

Brigitte Schlemmer, executive director of the **Fallbrook School of the Arts**, will talk about *A Double Dream for the School of the Arts* on March 18 at 10:30 a.m.

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*The Fallbrook Revitalization Advisory Council was formed by San Diego County 20 years ago to serve as a forum for community organizations where information about important Fallbrook issues could be exchanged. The networking group, which is made up of key members of municipal, private, non-profit and for-profit organizations, serves as an advisory body to the San Diego County Board of Supervisors.*

*The Fallbrook Revitalization Advisory Council meets on the third Thursday of every month at the Fallbrook Public Utilities District office at 990 E. Mission Road. Meetings are open to the public.*

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