



INYO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

TRINA ORRILL • JEFF GRIFFITHS • SCOTT MARCELLIN • JENNIFER ROESER • MATT KINGSLEY

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News Briefs from the Jan. 16 Board of Supervisors Meeting

RECOGNIZING DEDICATION

The Inyo County Board of Supervisors kicked off its January 16 regular meeting on Tuesday by recognizing employees who reached service milestones during the fourth quarter of 2023.

The following individuals received accolades from the Board as well as their department heads, and received commemorative pins for their years of dedicated service:

- Sheriff's Office – Shane Scott, 20 years; Brian Howard, 20 years; Jessica Royal-Dews, 5 years; and Mike Atkins, 5 years.
- D.A.'s Office – Mike Durbin, 15 years
- Health & Human Services – Laura Cortez Barrientos, 10 years; Natalie Luque, 10 years; Eryn Clark, 10 years; and Christina Bonnano, 5 years.
- Public Works – Chuck Baker, 5 years; Kody Nelson, 5 years; and Marjorie Chapman, 5 years.

CODE COMPLIANCE CHANGE

Tuesday's meeting saw the Board of Supervisors approving a cost-neutral change in the current code compliance system that moved the "Code Compliance Inspector" to the Planning Department.

The position was originally based in Administration and reported to the County Administrative Officer/Assistant CAO. As the volume of code compliance issues increased, the position regularly worked in close coordination with the Planning, Building and Safety, and Environmental Health departments as well as County Counsel. In coordination with these departments, it was determined that the individual in the compliance role could work more effectively within the Planning Department – benefiting from the technical expertise and oversight of the Planning Director, while continuing to work closely with Administration, County Counsel, Building and Safety and Environmental Health.

GRANT FUNDS FOR DIAZ LAKE PROJECT

The Board of Supervisors on Tuesday officially accepted \$1.475 million in grant funding from Caltrans through the Clean California Local Grant Program. The grant will be used on a host of improvements at Diaz Lake, one of the county's most popular recreation spots.

The Clean California Local Grant Program aims to reduce waste and debris in public rights-of-way, pathways, parks, transit centers, and other public places; enhance, rehabilitate, restore, or install measures to beautify and improve public spaces and mitigate the urban heat island effect; enhance public health, cultural connection, and community place-making by improving public spaces for walking and recreation; and advance equity for underserved communities.

Inyo County's Public Works Department seized on the program as an opportunity to make significant and much-needed improvements at Diaz Lake. In addition to vegetation/tule maintenance, the Diaz Lake Welcoming and Beautification Project will consist of adding and/or improving trash and recycling receptacles, fishing line recycling receptacles, educational signage to promote proper waste disposal, drought-tolerant shade trees, an ADA-compliant playground, an aeration system in the lake to improve water quality, a new transit stop and shelter for dial-a-ride access, a dog park with waste disposal, 12-foot by 12-foot shade structures, picnic and barbecue facilities, solar lighting for the restrooms, ADA ramps to access picnic and playground areas, a sand volleyball court, bi-annual litter abatement events, and new parking lot slurry seal and striping.

Per grant guidelines, the project must be completed and open to the public by June 30, 2026. According to Public Works, a ribbon-cutting ceremony will be held later this fiscal year.

COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS

Four individuals were appointed to two commissions overseen by the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday.

Alex Burciaga was appointed to the First 5 Children and Families Commission to fill out the remainder of a term ending Dec. 5, 2024. Heather Carr was appointed to a new three-year term ending Dec. 5, 2026. **Two vacancies still exist on the Commission and the application period closes Feb. 2 at 5 p.m. for anyone interested in applying for one of two three-year terms ending Dec. 5, 2026 – one for a regular member and one for an alternate.**

The seats must be filled by community members representing one of the following categories: recipient of project services in the county strategic plan; educator specializing in early childhood development; representative of a local childcare coordination group; representative of a local organization for prevention or early intervention for families at risk; representative of community-based organization that promotes and early childhood development; representative of a local school district; or representative of a local medical, pediatric, or obstetric association of societies.

To apply, email a letter of interest to the Assistant Clerk of the Board of Supervisors at dellis@inyocounty.us.

The Board on Tuesday also filled two vacancies on the Inyo County Water Commission by reappointing Dan Berry to serve a four-year term ending Dec. 31, 2027 and appointing newcomer Vikki Glinskii to a four-year term also ending Dec. 31, 2027.

Ms. Glinskii now fills the seat formerly occupied by Nate Gratz, who served on the commission since 2017. His service is much appreciated and the Board wishes him well.

COMMISSION ASSIGNMENTS

The Board of Supervisors approved commission assignments for calendar year 2024. The assignments cover a wide range of local, state, and national committees, commissions, and boards – from the Eastern Sierra Area Agency Advisory Committee to the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) to the National Association of Counties (NACo).

As recommended by Chairperson Matt Kingsley, there were only a few minor changes to last year's assignments. Kingsley proposed and the Board approved assigning Supervisor Trina Orrill to a new alternate position on the City of Bishop-County of Inyo Liaison Committee (with Supervisors Jeff Griffiths and Scott Marcellin as the main representatives), Supervisor Jennifer Roeser to a new alternate position on the Los Angeles-Inyo County Standing Committee (with Supervisors Griffiths and Kingsley as the main representatives), and Supervisor Marcellin to the existing alternate position for the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) Board of Directors (with Chairperson Kingsley serving as the main representative).

The assignments to the other two major organizations representing counties remain the same. Supervisor Roeser is the representative to NACo and Supervisor Marcellin will remain the alternate. Supervisor Orrill will continue to serve as the County's CSAC representative with Supervisor Griffiths as the alternate. Griffiths pulls double duty on the CSAC Executive Committee where he serves as First Vice President.

A full list of the 2024 Board Committee Assignments can be found on the county website at: <http://tinyurl.com/4y8pr2f6>.

EIGHTEEN MULES AND A BEAR

Members of the U.S. Forest Service Region 5 "Pack Stock Center of Excellence" gave a report to the Board of Supervisors Tuesday on their recent participation in the 2024 Tournament of Roses Parade to commemorate Smokey Bear's 80th birthday. Representing the team before the Board were Mt. Whitney District Ranger Taro Pusina, stock coordinators Michael Morse and Lee Roeser, and Detail Fire Management Officer Levi Ray.

Primarily based on the Inyo National Forest, the Center prepared, organized, and presented the entry which featured a tribute to Smokey, wildland firefighters, and the pack mules that support firefighters. The months-long effort included the design and construction of a float and formulation of an Incident Command Team for the delegation of tasks across multiple national forests, culminating in 18 mules, 10 stock handlers, 16 firefighters, and Smokey himself representing the U.S. Forest Service as they traveled down the distinguished, 5.5-mile route on January 1, 2024.

When not in the international spotlight, the Pack Stock Center for Excellence provides wildland fire support, training for stock use and primitive tools/techniques (Roeser said the Center trains approximately 350 individuals a year from across the nation), resource project support, project oversight, technical expertise and consulting, development of safety protocols and Job Hazard Analyses, community outreach and education, and law enforcement support.

Supervisor Jen Roeser (a volunteer on the project who helped drive the pack train) had the honor of introducing the group on Tuesday. "Nearly a billion people watch the Rose Parade on TV – it's the nation's New Year's Day celebration – and I think it's pretty neat that the Rose Parade Tournament of Roses Committee as well as the Forest Service based in Washington, D.C. recognized that the traditional skills of packing mules for everything from recreation to support of wildland firefighters is something that has a rich history here in the Eastern Sierra," she said.

"I just want to note that (the Center) is literally based right here in Inyo County and I don't know how many people realize that. It's a nationally recognized and established unit that does amazing work all over California and a number of neighboring states," Roeser continued. "To be accepted once to the tournament of Roses parade is pretty special but this group, the Pack Stock Center of Excellence, has been invited and accepted three times. The Inyo National Forest is a partner agency of Inyo County so getting a chance to celebrate the amazing amount of work, preparation, planning, logistics and execution that made for this amazing presentation is an honor."

UPDATES AND PRESENTATIONS

The Board rounded out its Tuesday, Jan. 16 meeting with several presentations and updates, including a report on current projects and initiatives of the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments, presented by Executive Director of Regional Coordination Elaine Kabala, and a report on regional broadband activities by Regional Broadband Coordinator Scott Armstrong.

As part of his presentation, Armstrong reported that the California Department of Technology (CDT) is accepting public comments on a Draft Digital Equity Plan through January 25, 2024. The Digital Equity Plan is part of the Federal Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment program, or BEAD, which itself is part of the

federal Investment Infrastructure and Jobs Act (IIJA). The program makes available \$42.45 billion to expand high-speed internet access by funding planning, infrastructure deployment, and adoption programs across the country.

Residents are encouraged to offer feedback on the plan by visiting the [State Digital Equity Plan page](#) to access the draft, then selecting the [public comment form](#) and following the instructions from there. Or, visit <https://broadbandforall.cdt.ca.gov/state-digital-equity-plan/>.

The Board also heard from Inyo County Film Commissioner Jesse Steele, who reported that filming has slowed a bit for the season, allowing him more time to work on development of a universal permit for Inyo County and building the Commission's online presence. The website now includes a comprehensive list of local resources (caterers, hotels, automotive services, etc.) that local businesses can add themselves to, links to all agency permits, and a growing gallery of local "extras." Check out the improvements at <https://inyocountyvisitor.com/film/>.

Friends of the Amargosa Basin President Susan Sorrells and Executive Director Cameron Mayer provided an update on the grassroots effort to create the Amargosa Basin National Monument. The first step in the process includes gathering input from a wide variety of stakeholders, including residents and business owners, the recreating public, Tribal nations, government agencies, and elected officials.

It is expected that the group will return to the Board of Supervisors at a later date requesting a letter of support for its endeavor.

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