

the Fernley reporter

FERNLEY'S HOMETOWN NEWS

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City confirms 100,000 gallons of sewage escaped lift station

Another 100,000 gallons collected inside facility; Wells 9 and 9A being monitored and sampled

By Rachel Dahl

The City of Fernley has confirmed that approximately 100,000 gallons of untreated wastewater escaped the East Lift Station Friday, Sept. 11, crossed an adjacent parcel of land and traveled along a railroad embankment, contradicting an earlier public characterization that the spill had been contained.

Another estimated 100,000 gallons accumulated in the basement of the lift station, bringing the total involved in the incident to approximately 200,000 gallons, according to a city statement released Tuesday.

Nevada Division of Environmental Protection Environmental Assistance and Certification Program Coordinator Zachary Lamebull provided the incident report filed by Ozzie Henke, the City of Fernley Utilities Director, which confirms the 200,000-gallon estimate was reported by the City of Fernley at 8:43 a.m. Friday morning.

The city press release said Q&D Construction notified the City at approximately 6 a.m. Friday that water was coming out of the East Lift Station and traveling south onto neighboring property.

“Wastewater flowed out past the building onto a vacant lot south and down the east side of the rail spur,



The City of Fernley installed a bypass around the lift station that failed on Friday, Sept. 11. In the background is Well 9 that provides municipal water to the City of Fernley. The city has said that the well was not affected, but in an abundance of caution, will be monitored and sampled.

causing some erosion along the access road and spur line,” the release said.

Photographs taken after the spill show a deep erosion channel cut alongside the railroad embankment, with displaced rock and soil extending away from the lift station.

The city said emergency bypass pumping was fully operational by 2:30 p.m. Friday, restoring normal flow from the collection system to the wastewater treatment plant.

Water trucks carrying chlorinated water were used to treat exposed soil.

The city's account clarifies that the wastewater was not contained within the lift-station property.

In a comment posted Saturday in response to The Reporter's original story, City Councilman Albert Torres wrote that the incident involved an underground structural break.

“It was contained, and is being

cleaned up,” Torres wrote. “The City and the State will do inspections and will make sure everything is cleaned up, decontaminated and the property owner is made whole.”

The city's Tuesday statement acknowledges that approximately half of the estimated wastewater left the facility, crossed neighboring property and caused erosion along the railroad infrastructure.

The city did not officially respond to several requests for information regarding the spill until Tuesday. The detailed public statement was released four days after the failure.

An internal report prepared Friday by Chief Operating Officer Barry Williams for the mayor and City Council described the incident as a “catastrophic failure” involving critical city infrastructure.

The report said wastewater accumulated in the lift-station basement and caused erosion to portions of the embankment supporting a rail spur owned by Mark IV Capital. It said Premier Construction had been retained to inspect the embankment, determine the extent of the damage and perform repairs.

The internal report did not provide a spill estimate, identify the lift

Continued on PAGE 2 - WELL 9..

Planning Commission tables Mark IV power plant permit

Staff recommended approval; commissioners sought ethics decision and more public input

By Rachel Dahl

The Fernley Planning Commission voted 5-2 last week to delay consideration of a proposed \$600 million natural gas power plant near the Victory Logistics District, despite a recommendation from city staff to approve the project.

The commission tabled Mark IV Capital's conditional use permit until its October meeting, citing a pending Nevada Commission on Ethics opinion involving Commissioner Cody Wagner and a desire for additional

public discussion of the project. The proposed Victory Power facility would generate up to 324 megawatts of electricity on approximately 109 acres east of Interstate 80. The project would initially occupy about 50 acres and include up to 36 natural gas generation units, with no more than 29 operating at one time.

City planning staff told commissioners the project complies with the city's industrial zoning and comprehensive plan and that required findings for approval could be made. Staff recommended approval subject to a

series of conditions addressing noise, stack height, environmental review, emergency response and state permitting requirements.

Mark IV representatives said the privately financed project is intended to provide power for industrial development in the Victory Logistics District, including data centers and advanced manufacturing businesses that require considerably more electricity than is currently available.

During questioning, company representatives said potential users have sought between 415 and 440 mega-

watts of power, although not all of those companies are committed to Fernley. Mark IV representatives said some prospective businesses have already gone elsewhere because sufficient power could not be provided quickly enough.

The company said the plant would employ approximately 30 people once operational and more than 100 workers at various stages of construc-

Continued on PAGE 6 - POWER PLANT..

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IN THIS EDITION

Captain's Log.....	2	Education.....	8
Features.....	3	Law & Order.....	10
Announcements.....	4	Inside Veer.....	11
Community.....	5, 6	Pet O' the Week.....	12
Local Government.....	7		

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



Captain’s Log – Limits

I have too many ideas.
Not necessarily good ideas – let’s not get carried away. But I have a lot of them.
I can walk from one end of the office to the other and, somewhere between the front door and the coffee pot, come up with a new publication, a podcast, a special section, a community event, a new revenue stream, and possibly an acquisition. Or four.
For about 20 minutes, every single one of them seems brilliant.
That’s my problem – ideas are a dime a dozen. Execution is not.
Every idea comes with a hidden invoice attached to it. Somebody has to build it. Somebody has to sell it. Somebody has to write it, edit it, print it, post it, invoice it, promote it, answer questions about it, and then, God help us, maintain it.
This is the part people like me tend to skip over. Everything looks good when you’re wearing these rose-colored glasses, and you can see the thing in its finished state.
What I neglect to consider very often is the living from Tuesday to Tuesday, slogging through all the implementations. Tuesdays are where ideas live or die.
It is one thing to say, “We should do a weekly video.”
But I can feel my team rolling their eyes at me – “Oh, great, there she goes again. Great.”
Who is filming it? Who is editing it? Who writes the script? Who posts it? Who watches the numbers? Who sells the sponsorship? Who makes sure we are still doing it six months from now when everybody is tired of it?
Suddenly the cute little idea has employees, and they’re still noodling that LAST great idea I had.
I like to think that I am learning – slowly, painfully, and probably several years later than I should have – that having ideas is not really the valuable part.
The valuable part is deciding which ones deserve to live. Grow legs, so to speak. And that, for me, is a much harder job.
Bad ideas are easy; we can skip over those fairly quickly, but the good ideas are my “El Guapo.” (Movie line if you can name it!)
What I’ve learned is a good idea can still be the wrong idea right now. A good idea can take money away from a better idea, pull a good employee away from something that actually matters, and become one more half-built thing sitting around demanding attention.

And maybe worst of all, a good idea can make you feel productive while distracting you from the boring thing that actually needs to get finished.
Which stings a little.
So I have been trying to get better at asking harder questions before I chase the next shiny object. Does this make what we already do stronger? Does it solve a real problem? Will anybody pay for it? Does it help us serve people better? Does it build trust?
And the big one:
Who, exactly, is going to do it?
And that gets a pause because I am also learning that leadership is not the same thing as personally dragging every interesting idea across the finish line; sometimes it’s just saying no.
To your very own self.
After all, a girl’s gotta know her limitations. (Another movie line if you can name it!)
So, while I practice adulting and learning (admitting) that there are limitations, we’ll always be right here...
...Keeping you Posted.
- Rach

Continued from FRONT - WELL 9...

station by name or address the possible effect on nearby municipal wells.
It also differs from Tuesday’s release concerning how the problem was discovered. The internal report says city staff identified the failure, while the public release says Q&D notified the city at approximately 6 a.m.
The internal report said the city notified its insurance carrier immediately and initiated a claim. Potential costs include emergency contractors, bypass pumping, clean-up, equipment repair or replacement and stabilization of the railroad embankment. No cost estimate has been released.
The cause remains unknown. The basement must be emptied before pumps, motors, electrical systems, controls, instrumentation and structural components can be inspected, according to the internal report.
The city anticipated completing removal of wastewater from the basement Tuesday. It said an engineer and licensed cleanup team would then inspect the building, clean the facility and collect soil samples. Any soil found to be contaminated would be removed and disposed of.
The East Lift Station sits near municipal Wells 9 and 9A, and the city notice said neither well was affected by the failure and stated that there was “no threat to the public.” It also said both wells would be monitored and sampled “in an abundance of caution.”
The release does not say whether either well was taken out of service, when samples would be collected, what contaminants would be tested or whether results were available before the city concluded the wells were unaffected.
The city said water from both wells is chlorinated before being sent to the Water Treatment Plant, where it is treated again before entering the potable-water system.
The city also said the NDEP and its Bureau of Water Pollution Control were notified within an hour of the failure. It has not released the time of that notification or the initial report submitted to regulators.
City records identify Nathan McIntyre as Fernley’s wastewater systems foreman. McIntyre is the son of Mayor Neal McIntyre. Nathan

prepares the wastewater division’s monthly operational reports. A report dated Jan. 5 stated that daily rounds and inspections of the East Lift Station were completed during December 2025.
The city has not said when the station was last inspected before Friday’s failure, whether earlier inspections identified structural or mechanical concerns, or what maintenance had been performed on the failed equipment.
The City Council adopted a new Sewer Master Plan in August identifying approximately \$7.61 million in existing maintenance and repair needs. The listed projects included a \$2.97 million East Lift Station and force-main project.
The city’s internal report says a later update will identify the confirmed cause, damage, repair plan, costs, insurance coverage, restoration timeline and any corrective improvements recommended to prevent another failure.
The Fernley Reporter will update this story when NDEP provides its response concerning Wells 9 and 9A and when sampling results and additional incident records become available.

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FEATURES

Fernley Marks 25 Years Since 9/11

Speakers emphasize remembrance, service and vigilance



North Lyon Fire Battalion Chief Bill Snyder, Photo by Robert Perea.



Nevada Veterans Coalition members fire a cannon during the 25th Anniversary 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony at the North Lyon Fire Station. Photo by Robert Perea.



Keynote speaker Susan Malone. Photo by Robert Perea.

By Robert Perea

Fernley marked the 25th anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks last Friday with a ceremony centered on remembrance, service and the enduring impact of the day on first responders, military families and communities across the country. The event also included the presentation of the Fernley Patriot of the Year award to longtime volunteer Fred Wilson.

Throughout the ceremony, Master of Ceremonies Paul Loop recounted the timeline of the attacks and the losses at the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and in Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

Keynote speaker Susan Malone, a former Marine Corps officer, FBI agent and intelligence professional, told attendees the attacks “shattered America’s complacency and truly changed the world,” and said the anniversary remains a moment to reflect on the lives lost and the responsibilities carried forward.

“We are here today to remember and redouble our efforts to keep alive the memories of our 9/11 victims by volunteering our time, talent and treasure,” Malone said.

She recounted the scope of the tragedy – 2,977 confirmed victims, including 327 foreign nationals from 90 countries, thousands of fami-

lies who lost spouses or parents, and the hundreds of firefighters, police officers and Port Authority personnel who died responding to the World Trade Center. She shared several messages left by victims to loved ones, including Flight 93 attendant CeeCee Lyles and Melissa Harrington Hughes, who was attending a conference at the World Trade Center.

Malone also described her family’s experience on Sept. 11. Her husband, George, a retired Marine Corps command center chief, and their son, Marty, a volunteer firefighter and Navy Department federal firefighter, were preparing for a charity golf tournament when emergency pagers began sounding. Marty left immediately for his duty station, part of the fire department backup for the Pentagon. George returned home, prayed for the victims and later volunteered to return to active duty.

Malone said she spent the weeks after the attacks in New York, where she was working for the United Nations war crimes tribunal, attending funerals and supporting colleagues. She described the city’s response as unified and compassionate.

“People took the time to talk to each other. They greeted each other with an unbound love of friendship,” she said.

However, Malone also warned that terrorism threats have evolved in the decades since 2001, with foreign organizations increasingly using social media, the internet and AI to radicalize individuals at home. She said recent intelligence assessments show ISIS and al-Qaeda remain active overseas and continue to seek lone offenders inside the United States.

Malone told attendees that Fernley’s commitment to service reflects the values that endured after 9/11.

“Even the smallest act of service, the simplest act of kindness, is a way to honor those we lost,” she said.

North Lyon Fire Battalion Chief Bill Snyder also addressed the crowd, saying the attacks were a turning point for many in the fire service, including himself. Snyder said he grew up in the firehouse and was serving as a cadet in 2000, already feeling part of the profession when the towers fell.

“I saw men and women running toward the smoke, toward the towers,” Snyder said. “Firefighters who knew the odds were against them, but they went in anyway because they knew there were people inside relying on them to get in there and get them out.”

Snyder emphasized that the anniversary is not only about the scale of the tragedy but about the character of the people who were lost, first responders and civilians alike.

“They were mothers and fathers and sons and daughters. They were the very best of us,” he said. “Their sacrifice reminds us that safety and security that we all enjoy every day isn’t something we should take for granted.”

He told attendees that the safety and security people enjoy today are built on the courage of ordinary people who face extraordinary moments.

“This uniform doesn’t make you a hero,” Snyder said. “It’s the choices you make in the situations that are the worst and how you navigate them that defines you.”

Continued on PAGE 11 - 9/11...



A drummer and bagpiper from the Sierra Highlanders led the presentation of colors and played Amazing Grace. Photo by Robert Perea





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KNOWLEDGE IS POWER: LEARN, ENGAGE, VOTE

CIVICS 101 – I was arrested. Now what?

By Leanna Lehman

Arrested and standing in handcuffs is not generally a place we see ourselves. The hours that follow an arrest can be scary, particularly if it is a first arrest and you are unfamiliar with the criminal justice process.

While this article is not legal advice, it can offer some basic information about what happens next.

At the time of arrest, you may ask officers why you are being

arrested. Keep in mind that the charges ultimately filed may change as law enforcement investigates and prosecutors review the case.

Law enforcement officers also offer some simple advice: Stay calm and be respectful. Resisting arrest can be dangerous to both you and the arresting officer, and becoming combative can turn a relatively routine arrest into a much more serious matter with additional charges.

Being arrested is only the beginning of the process and does

not mean you are guilty or have been convicted. It means you have been taken into custody based on legal authority and probable cause, which requires more than a hunch or suspicion but far less than the proof needed to convict.

Following an arrest, officers will transport you to jail for booking, where detention staff will also assess whether you have medical or other special needs.

And, just like in the movies, you are allowed phone calls. Nevada law gives you the right to make a rea-

sonable number of completed calls, including calls to family, an attorney, or a bail agent.

There is a catch: The law does not guarantee access to your cell-phone, which will ordinarily be secured with your other property. Whether staff allows you to retrieve a number from it depends on the facility. So, while it may seem drastically outdated, memorizing at

Continued on PAGE 10 - CIVICS 101...

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Fernley Mayor’s Free Recycle Day set for Sept. 19

Staff Report

Fernley residents will have a chance to clear out unwanted household items during the Mayor’s Free Recycle Day on Saturday, Sept. 19.

The event will be held from 8 a.m. to noon, or until collection bins are full, at Out of Town Park, located on the 6-acre lot behind the Rodeo Grounds.

Residents can bring a variety of recyclable and disposable items, including large trash and debris, bicycles, one large appliance per household, computers and electronics, batteries, tires, green waste, cardboard and limited amounts of household hazardous materials such as paint and oil.

Items that will not be accepted include asbestos or asbestos-related materials, radioactive smoke detectors, mercury and CRT televisions or tube TVs.

The event is being supported by H&R Environmental Services, Redwood Materials and Waste Management.

Volunteers and donations are also needed. Organizers are seeking bottled water, work gloves, lunch items and monetary donations to help cover recycling bins and volunteer supplies.

For questions or additional information, contact April Homme at ahomme@cityoffernley.org or 775-784-9858.

What you can and can't recycle

Yes	No
• Large trash & debris (no more than one truck bed size limit) • Bicycles • 1 large appliance per household (refrigerators, washers, dryers, etc.) • Computers, laptops & printers • Batteries (laptop, cellphone, power tools, etc.) • Car batteries • Electronics • Tires (4 per household) • Green waste (leaves, branches, etc.) • Cardboard • Household hazardous materials including paint & oil (3ft x 3ft, no more than one truck bed)	• Asbestos or asbestos-related items • Radioactive smoke detectors • Mercury • CRT TVs or tube TVs

Volunteers & Donations needed

- 10 cases of water
- Working gloves (sizes small to x-large)
- Lunch items (chips, cookie platter, sandwich platter, gatorade)
- Monetary (for recycle bins, lunches, volunteer swag, additional items needed)

Infographic courtesy of the City of Fernley.

Fernley Community Events

SEP 18

OPEN MIC NIGHT
7:00 p.m.
McHoppers Brew Co.
396 US Highway 95A North

STARGAZING at the Library
Brought to you by Dr. Thomas Herrings and volunteers from the Jack C. Davis Observatory at Western Nevada College.
Fernley Branch Library
575 Silver Lace Blvd
775-575-3366

SEP 19

MAYOR'S FREE RECYCLING DAY
8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Out of Town Park
ahomme@cityoffernley.org

POKER TOURNAMENT BOYS & GIRLS CLUB
\$75 Buy-In
5:00 PM
695 E. Main St.
(775) 360-2424

SEP 22

TRIVIA NIGHT
7:00 p.m.
Frontier Fun Center
480 W. Main St.

SEP 24

TRIVIA (21+)
7:00 p.m.
McHoppers Brew Co.
396 US Highway 95A North

SEP 25

MOVIE - THE SUPER MARIO GALAXY MOVIE
2:30 p.m.
Fernley Branch Library
575 Silver Lace Blvd
775-575-3366

SEP 26

LOW COST MIRCOCHIP CLINIC
9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.
\$15 per pet OR donate an unopened 10-pound bag of pet food.
595 Silver Lace Blvd

Live COMEDY (21+)
8:00 p.m.
McHoppers Brew Co.
396 US Highway 95A North

SEP 29

TRIVIA NIGHT
7:00 p.m.
Frontier Fun Center
480 W. Main St.



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SERVING FERNLEY



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SATURDAY,
SEPT. 19

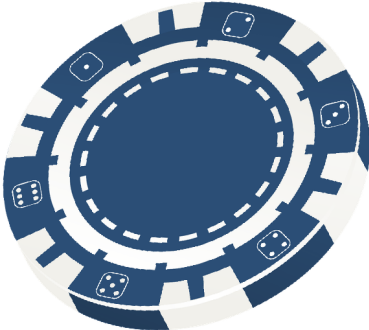
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COMMUNITY

Fernley High School Homecoming King and Queen crowned during halftime of last Friday’s football game



Fernley High School students held a fundraiser for this years Homecoming Hero Loring Hutchinson, who is battling leukemia. Fernley High School Leadership Advisor Jackie Kingston said they are still collecting and counting donations and don’t have a final tally for the fundraiser. Photo courtesy of Fernley High School



Baylor Gillespie and Morganne Neher were crowned as the Fernley High School Homecoming King and Queen during halftime of last Friday’s football game. Photo courtesy of Fernley High School

Frey turns to chickens for soil health in regenerative farming shift

By Rachel Dahl

Fallon farmer Joe Frey has spent the past several years changing the way he farms, moving away from conventional tillage and chemical inputs toward regenerative agriculture — and most recently adding more than 1,600 laying hens to the operation.

Frey discussed the transition during a recent Rotary presentation, explaining that his move into regenerative agriculture began not with environmental concerns, but with economics.

Coming out of drought, Frey said more than half of the family farm needed to be put back into production, a project he estimated would have cost about \$1.5 million using conventional methods.

“I didn’t have the million and a half bucks, didn’t have the equipment, didn’t have the time,” he said.

He began looking at minimum-tillage and no-till farming and attended a presentation by soil health educator Ray Archuleta. What began as an effort to cut production costs quickly developed into a broader shift in how Frey thought about farming.

Today, he said, the operation has been primarily no-till or minimum-till for about seven years. The farm has also become certified organic and incorporates principles promoted by organizations including the Savory Institute and Regenified.

Rather than growing single crops year after year, Frey now emphasizes plant diversity, reduced soil disturbance and the integration of livestock.

“You don’t ever find a monocrop in



Joe Frey, photo courtesy of Great Basin Community Food Coop.

nature,” he said.

Frey said diverse plantings help build healthier soils and can make crops less susceptible to insects. His fields may contain alfalfa, grasses, brassicas, chicory, clover, sorghum, peas, buckwheat and other species.

The goal is to keep living roots in the soil, protect the biological community beneath the surface and allow plants, animals and microorganisms to work together.

Livestock are a key part of that system.

Frey began adding laying hens this year, starting with 500 birds in February. Those hens are now producing roughly 350 eggs per day. Another 500 birds are nearing laying age, and

an additional 650 are expected to begin producing around the first of the year.

The chickens live in mobile shelters and are rotated through fields behind electric net fencing.

The eggs provide income, while the birds provide another benefit: manure and biological activity returned directly to the soil.

“The cash crop, I guess, in that instance would be the eggs, and then the manure in the field is the benefit of the chickens,” Frey said.

The birds forage throughout the fields during the day, eating insects and whatever else they find — including, Frey said, small fish and crawdads from irrigation ditches — before

returning to their shelters in the evening.

Frey farms about 1,500 acres, roughly 1,000 of them irrigated and primarily in alfalfa, with another 500 acres of dryland.

Changing the system has not been without challenges.

Traditional hay buyers often want pure alfalfa, making mixed grass-and-alfalfa hay harder to market even when feed tests show strong nutritional value. Frey said organic dairies may provide a better market because their certification requires some grass and pasture in their feeding programs.

The egg business, however, has shown promise.

Most of the farm’s current egg production is being sold through Great Basin Community Food Co-op in Reno, with smaller quantities going to Fallon restaurants, including Wild Horse Cafe.

Frey said his immediate goal is to continue expanding the egg operation while strengthening the farm financially after several difficult years in the hay market.

“I think we’ve got the knowledge and the capability to do it,” he said, “and we can provide some really healthy protein to the area.”

For Frey, regenerative agriculture ultimately comes down to rebuilding a closer connection between people, food and the land producing it.

“I think it’s time to get smaller, scale it down, get closer, get more intimate with our food,” he said.



FERNLEY SENIOR CENTER MENU

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Monday, Sept. 21

Salisbury Steak
Mashed Potatoes
Gravy
Whole Wheat Bread
Carrots
Mandarins
100% Juice

Tuesday, Sept 22

Chicken Gumbo
Red Beans & Rice
Colorful Salad
Honey Dressing
Chantilly Fruit Cup

Wednesday, Sept 23

Beef Tacos
Ranch Style Beans
Mexi corn
Tropical Fruit Salad

Thursday, Sept 24

Parmesan Garlic Fish
Biscuit
Four Bean Salad
Peaches
100% Juice

Friday, Sept 25

Birthday Lunch
Philly Cheesesteak Pasta
Whole Wheat Roll
Cauliflower
Beet Salad
100% Juice
Strawberry Ice Cream

COMMUNITY

Fernley maps roads for a city twice its size

By Rachel Dahl

Fernley’s long-range transportation plan is beginning to take shape, with a new traffic model projecting what the city’s road system will need if the population doubles over the next 20 years.

The draft corridor plan presented to the Fernley Planning Commission Sept. 9 identifies a series of major road and intersection projects intended to reduce congestion, improve safety and prepare the city for continued growth.

Consultants from Wood Rodgers told commissioners the planning effort produced Fernley’s first comprehensive traffic model, built from the Regional Transportation Commission’s existing regional model and calibrated with the Nevada Department of Transportation. Unlike a conventional traffic study focused on one project or intersection, the model allows planners to test how growth and new road connections affect the entire city network.

The model looked at two growth scenarios: Fernley doubling in population over roughly the next two decades and a higher-growth scenario in which the city triples. Planners based their recommendations on the more moderate assumption that Fernley will double.

Without significant road improvements, consultants said congestion would worsen at several already-troubled locations, including U.S. 95 and Cottonwood Lane,

Farm District Road and U.S. 95, the roundabout and intersections leading toward Interstate 80.

Some planned development projects, however, could provide significant relief.

The Nevada Pacific Parkway extension is expected to reduce traffic through the roundabout, while a future Miller Lane/Truckee Lane connection through Red Hawk Ranch could pull traffic away from U.S. 95 and surrounding side streets.

Consultants also tested several other potential road connections suggested during the planning process.

A future Wadsworth connection could benefit development in Fernley’s southwest area, while extending Cottonwood Lane to Miller Lane was identified as a project that could provide more immediate relief by creating another route toward the Red Hawk connection.

A proposal to extend U.S. 95A north to Interstate 80 with a new interchange provided some traffic benefit in the model, but consultants said the improvement was relatively small compared with the cost of acquiring right of way and building a new interstate connection. The project was not recommended as a priority.

Several existing roads would ultimately need major widening if growth continues as projected.

The plan recommends widening U.S. 95A to four lanes from Fernley High School to Shadow Lane; widening Main Street to four lanes from

Truckee Lane to Interstate 80 at Exit 46; widening Farm District Road to four lanes between Shadow Lane and the roundabout; and eventually widening the Exit 48 area with additional lanes, turn controls and intersection improvements.

The railroad undercrossing on Main Street — commonly known as the “mouse hole” — remains one of the most difficult pieces of the system.

Consultants said widening Main Street would eventually require widening the Union Pacific undercrossing, a costly and lengthy project because of railroad coordination, environmental work and construction requirements. They recommended beginning that planning process early because the narrow crossing will increasingly become a barrier as Fernley grows.

Intersection improvements are also included throughout the plan.

U.S. 95 and Cottonwood Lane emerged as one of the highest priorities, along with Fremont Street and Chisholm Trail. The existing roundabout is expected to provide adequate service in the near term, particularly after the Nevada Pacific Parkway extension is completed, but planners said it will eventually need to be converted to a multilane roundabout as traffic increases.

The plan also recommends controlled intersections at both ends of Cottonwood Lane, additional turn lanes between the roundabout and Interstate 80, and improved turning movements for trucks at Main Street

and U.S. 95A.

Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure is included as well. Consultants said proposed widening projects would incorporate shared-use paths, sidewalks and bike lanes, with an emphasis on filling gaps in Fernley’s existing network.

Commissioner Cody Wagner specifically raised concerns about speeds near Fernley High School and suggested reducing the speed limit from 55 mph to 45 mph in front of the school and to 35 mph approaching the Cottonwood intersection.

He also questioned the ranking of the Pilot Road/Main Street intersection, saying poor visibility and truck traffic make the area more dangerous than its placement on the priority list suggests.

The plan does not come with construction funding.

Consultants said it is intended to serve as a guide for the city and NDOT as projects compete for state transportation funding, grants, development contributions and potentially future impact-fee revenue. Priorities could change depending on funding availability and which developments move forward first.

The draft recommendations will also be presented to the City Council. Consultants said they will incorporate feedback from the Planning Commission, council and city staff before releasing a final document around late September or early October. The plan will then return to the council for adoption.

Continued from FRONT - POWER PLANT..

tion. Because the proposed turbines are air cooled, Mark IV representatives estimated the project would use about half an acre-foot of water per year, primarily for offices and landscaping.

The company is seeking a three-year approval period rather than the city’s standard one-year CUP expiration period. Representatives said the project is expected to take until early 2029 to construct and commission, in part because the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection air-quality permitting process is expected to take roughly a year.

The applicant also presented a fiscal impact analysis projecting approximately \$63.6 million in general fund benefit to the city over 20 years. About \$43 million of that projection is tied to a proposed franchise fee associated with a Fernley power district or similar arrangement that has not yet been established.

Before Mark IV’s presentation began, Wagner disclosed that the com-

pany had formally requested his recusal from matters involving the power plant and Victory Logistics.

Wagner said the company’s letter alleged a pattern of prejudgment and advocacy against the project. He said he requested an advisory opinion from the Nevada Commission on Ethics Aug. 5, was asked to provide additional information Aug. 26 and submitted that material Sept. 2.

Wagner said the Ethics Commission notified him shortly before the meeting that it would not issue an opinion in time for the hearing.

Wagner cited a prior Ethics Commission opinion involving another public official and said he believes the commission will find that a public official is not prohibited from voting solely because of opinions previously expressed.

“If a vote is held tonight, particularly on item 3.1, I will plan to participate,” Wagner said.

However, Wagner also recommended delaying the matter until the Ethics Commission issues its opinion.

“I will not be bullied or intimidat-

ed out of participating or voting on an item with this amount of importance to Fernley’s future,” Wagner said, adding that he remained committed to the applicant’s due-process rights.

Later in the hearing, Wagner expressed concern that relatively few residents were present.

“I am shocked there’s about 10 residents here, if not less,” he said. “I worry that our population just does not know the impact of what we’re about to vote on tonight.”

Vice Chair Jenni McCullar ultimately moved to table the application for two reasons: to await an answer concerning Wagner’s ethics inquiry and to allow another public workshop on the power plant.

McCullar said she would like residents to hear from an outside or “non-biased” party who could discuss the impacts of a similar project in another community. Commissioner Julianne White seconded the motion.

Wagner, Angela Lewis, McCullar, Chairwoman Tessa Garvin and White voted to table the permit. Commissioners Jake VanderHeiden and Barry Williams Sr. voted against the delay.

Near the end of the meeting, Wagner again called for a well-publicized public workshop, saying he wanted more information about the community’s views before making a decision.

City Chief Development Officer Michelle Rambo responded that Mark IV had already held two “very well publicized” open houses and that the city had completed the public notification required by Nevada law, including notifying property owners beyond the minimum required area.

Rambo said another public hearing or open house is not required by the city.

“I don’t know who’s going to hold this public hearing or this public open house because it’s not a requirement of the city,” she said.

Wagner then offered to organize the additional meeting himself. Garvin responded that planning commissioners should not be involved in organizing it, and Wagner withdrew the offer.

The conditional use permit is expected to be returned to the Planning Commission in October.

Letters to the Editor

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT

WNC training center approved for Victory Logistics

By Rachel Dahl

Western Nevada College is moving ahead with plans for a vocational and academic training center in Fernley’s Victory Logistics District after the Planning Commission unanimously approved a conditional use permit for the project Sept. 9.

The permit allows Premier Design Build Group to complete tenant improvements inside an existing warehouse at 1740 N. Nevada Pacific Parkway. About 28,500 square feet will eventually be converted into classrooms, instructional laboratories, offices, conference rooms, student support areas and other educational space.

City staff said the center is intended to provide workforce development, vocational education, safety training, technical instruction and academic programs supporting employers in Victory Logistics and elsewhere in northern Nevada. Staff found the project consistent with the city’s master plan and surrounding industrial uses and recommended approval.

Jackson Grout of Mark IV Capital

told commissioners that Western Nevada College remains the intended tenant and that the buildout will occur in phases.

The first phase will retain more of the warehouse’s open configuration, with electrical drops, access improvements and training cages for light assembly and electrical instruction. Later phases would build out the rest of the classroom and laboratory space.

The project is being supported by several grants.

Grout said \$1 million in federal grant funding has been released and another \$9 million is being targeted for next year, although he said securing that future funding will remain a challenge.

Western Nevada College Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs Dana Ryan said the college also has a \$1.8 million grant supporting the project, along with three additional grants totaling about \$4.5 million for the buildout.

Ryan said the college hopes to establish the Fernley program within the

next two years.

“We are just really committed to being in Fernley to provide the training that’s needed for the economic welfare of this community and surrounding communities,” Ryan said.

Courses could eventually include electrical work, manufacturing, HVAC, welding and other skilled trades. Ryan said WNC is already partnering with the Lyon County School District to offer welding instruction in Fernley.

“It’s really technical skilled-trades kind of programs,” she said.

Commissioners also questioned who would attend the center and whether the program could create additional demand for temporary housing in Fernley.

Commissioner Julianne White asked whether the college primarily expected local students or whether the center could attract large numbers of out-of-area workers.

“Is there any chance that it’s like every union worker east of the Mississippi needs to come take an electrical course and so then we have like these short-term classes that then re-

quire short-term housing for people that we don’t already have?” White asked.

Ryan said that is not how the college envisions the center operating.

“This is regular college classes for regular people,” she said, noting that out-of-state students pay higher tuition. “So, this is truly for residents of our region.”

Vice Chair Jenni McCuller also asked whether the facility would essentially be an electrical college. Ryan explained that electrical training would be only one part of a broader technical education program that could also include manufacturing, HVAC and welding.

No members of the public spoke against the application.

Commissioner Angela Lewis moved to approve the conditional use permit with the 12 conditions recommended by city staff. McCuller seconded the motion.

The commission approved the permit 7-0, with White casting what was described during the meeting as an “enthusiastic yes.”

Planning Commission backs new development rules, Clean Earth expansion

By Rachel Dahl

The Fernley Planning Commission unanimously recommended changes to the city’s development standards and approved an expansion of the Clean Earth Environmental Solutions facility during its Sept. 9 meeting.

The commission voted 7-0 to recommend approval of Bill 377, which would revise Fernley’s adjacency standards governing how new development transitions next to existing neighborhoods and lower-intensity land uses.

City staff said the existing rules have created confusion for developers, residents and regulators and do not always adequately address conflicts between new development and established neighborhoods. The proposed changes are intended to make the rules clearer while providing more specific standards for setbacks, buffering and impacts from more intensive development.

The Planning Commission previously recommended an earlier version

of the ordinance in March, but the City Council raised additional concerns and did not adopt it. Staff revised the proposal before bringing it back to the commission.

One of the biggest changes involves development adjacent to Fernley’s larger rural residential properties.

Under the revised proposal, new subdivisions next to property zoned GR20 or RR5 would be required to provide half-acre transitional lots along the shared boundary. Developers would no longer be able to substitute a landscaped buffer for those transitional lots. Properties adjoining RR1 and RR½ zoning would retain the option of using either transitional lots or approved buffering.

The revised ordinance also strengthens requirements for maintaining buffer areas. Responsibility would remain attached to the land, and homeowners associations, landscape maintenance districts or other entities responsible for buffers could not simply dissolve without another approved entity assuming responsibility.

Other changes expand the city’s ability to consider noise, odor, vibration, glare, smoke and dust when reviewing development. Industrial projects near homes, schools, parks or other sensitive uses could also face additional requirements addressing hazardous materials, truck traffic, emergency access and other operational impacts.

The ordinance now moves back to the City Council for consideration.

Later in the meeting, commissioners unanimously approved a conditional use permit allowing Clean Earth Environmental Solutions to expand its existing hazardous-waste processing and recycling facility at 2095 E. Newlands Drive.

The permit allows construction of a new 9,569-square-foot building containing an aerosol processing unit. The facility will include space for receiving and staging aerosol cans, magnetic sorting, a packing line, storage of waste liquids and equipment used to crush and process the containers.

Clean Earth has operated at the

Fernley site since acquiring the facility, while waste-management operations at the location date to 1986. The existing facility processes both hazardous and non-hazardous organic and inorganic waste.

During questioning, Commissioner Cody Wagner raised concerns about the facility’s regulatory history and referenced a 2011 federal hazardous-waste enforcement action involving a \$79,500 fine.

A company representative said the violation occurred under previous ownership, before Clean Earth acquired the facility.

Lisa Warner, associate planner said the expansion complies with the industrial zoning designation and surrounding land uses and recommended approval subject to 30 conditions. Those include compliance with city development requirements, North Lyon County Fire Protection District standards and applicable state and federal environmental regulations.

The commission approved the permit 7-0.

Meetings

Fernley City Council

1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month at 5:00 p.m.

City Hall, 595 Silver Lace Blvd.

Next meeting Oct. 2

Fernley Planning Commission

2nd Wednesday of the month at 5:00 p.m.

City Hall, 595 Silver Lace Blvd.

Next meeting Oct. 14

Fernley Senior Citizen Advisory Committee

2nd Friday of even numbered months at 9:00 a.m.

City Hall, 595 Silver Lace Blvd.

Next meeting Oct. 9

Lyon County Commission

1st and 3rd Thursday of the month at 9:00 a.m.

Lyon County Administrative Complex, 27 S. Main St., Yerington

Next meeting Oct. 1

Lyon County Planning Commission

2nd Tuesday of the month at 9:00 a.m.

Lyon County Administrative Complex, 27 S. Main St., Yerington

Next meeting Oct. 13

Lyon County Library Board of Trustees

4th Tuesday of the Month at 9:30 a.m.

Locations rotate between the 5 county libraries

Next meeting Sept. 22

Lyon County School District Board of Trustees

4th Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m.

Locations rotate between each attendance area

Next meeting Sept. 22

North Lyon County Fire Protection District Board of Trustees

2nd Thursday of the month

195 E. Main St.

Next meeting Oct, 15

Fernley Swimming Pool General Improvement District

3rd Tuesday of the month at 5:30 p.m.

300 Cottonwood Lane

Next meeting Oct 20

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EDUCATION

Fernley High School launches FIRST Robotics team with \$5,000 seed funding

By Robert Perea

Fernley High School is launching a new student robotics team to compete in the international FIRST Robotics Competition, backed by \$5,000 in seed money and a call for community support.

The team, Fernley FIRST Robotics, received its initial funding from the Microsoft Northern Nevada Community Fund, administered by ChangeX.org. Organizers are now seeking an additional \$5,000 from local businesses, families and community sponsors to cover startup costs and prepare for the upcoming competition season.

A community information meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, Sept. 15, for students, parents, prospective mentors and business sponsors to learn about the program, student op-

portunities and budget needs.

FIRST, an acronym for For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology, was founded in 1989 by Segway inventor Dean Kamen. The international youth organization hosts team-based robotics competitions designed to inspire students to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and math.

The high school program gives students hands-on experience in engineering, coding, mechanical design, electronics and project management. The team is open to students interested in building, programming, media, fundraising and business management.

Fernley FIRST Robotics is also recruiting adult volunteers for both technical and nontechnical roles. Technical mentors are needed for

mechanical systems, electrical wiring, programming, computer-aided design and fabrication. Nontechnical mentors are needed to assist with fundraising, communications, photography, social media and travel planning.

Organizers said the program was inspired by successful teams in other communities, including Penguin Empire Robotics in Novato, California. The goal is to establish a sustainable, long-term STEM program for Fernley students.

Community members can support the launch by sponsoring the team, donating tools or supplies, or volunteering as mentors.

For more information, to donate or to volunteer, contact Dowain Swain, computer science instructor at Fernley High School, at 775-575-3400 or dswain@lyoncsd.org.

WNC Recognizes 76 Students on Summer Dean’s List

Staff Report

Six students from Fernley and several others from Lyon County were among 76 students who made the 2026 Summer Dean's List at Western Nevada College.

To qualify for the Dean's List during the summer term, students are required to attain a grade point average of 3.50 or higher and complete six units of classes or more.

“Academic achievement requires commitment, discipline and perseverance, and our 2026 Summer Dean's List students have demonstrated all three,” said WNC President Dr. J. Kyle Dalpe. “Earning a 3.50 GPA or higher while completing at least six credits during the summer is a significant accomplishment, and these 76 students should be proud of the excellence they have achieved. Their success reflects not only their dedication, but also the support of our faculty, staff, families and communities. We congratulate each of our Dean's List honorees and look forward to seeing where their hard work takes them.”

Students achieving the academic honor are:

- Dayton**
Larisa Aguilar, Corey Andona, Kimberley Andona, Maria Barajas, Paula Hoffman-Claypool, Kaitlyn Kitchens, Richard Tidrick
- Fallon**
Dakota Ballard, Kendalle Dummar, Bowie Jarschke, Savahanna Kelley, Brooklyn Layton, Marilyn Mauwee, Alondra Ramirez, Autum Sanchez, Ashli Sehorn, Kodus Wehe
- Fernley**
Kaline Dos Anjos, Evelyn Julicher, Phoenix Knight, Emalee Moccio, Tina Rodriguez, Jenna Sunell
- Mound House**
Zach Edmiston
- Silver Springs**
Joleen Talbott
- Stagecoach**
Zachary Affeldt, Brandi Ferguson

We’d love to hear from you.

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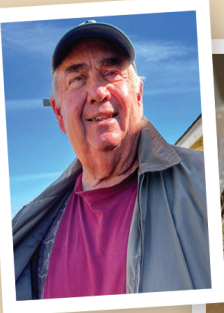
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The Victory Project: Investing in Fernley’s Future



Ask Victory

Got a question about the Victory Logistics District?
We want to answer it.

Curious about jobs, power, infrastructure, water, or what’s coming next to Fernley at our project? Tell us what’s on your mind and we’ll get you a straight answer.



You can email us directly at:
AskVictoryProject@gmail.com
or scan the QR code and
submit your questions!



Stay in touch with us by
following our Facebook page
@VictoryLogisticsDistrict

Ask Victory and We’ll Answer!

Over the past several years, the 4,300-acre Victory Logistics District has grown from open desert into one of Northern Nevada’s largest industrial developments, bringing new construction and, understandably, new questions from the community.

That’s why we’re launching Ask Victory: a direct line between our project and the people of Fernley. Starting this week, residents can submit any question about the Victory Logistics District: about traffic, water, power, jobs, timelines, tax revenue or project costs - or anything else you want to know - through an online portal or by email at AskVictoryProject@gmail.com. We’ll respond directly to everyone who writes in, and we’ll publish the most common questions and our answers, right here in the Fernley Reporter and on our Facebook page.

We’re doing this because a project this size and community importance deserves real answers, not rumors. Victory is not a single building or a single decision. It’s a multi-year, multi-phase development - from the buildings already open and operating today to the employers, infrastructure, and housing still to come. It will keep evolving as new needs and new opportunities emerge. That complexity is real, and so is our responsibility to be straightforward about it, even when the honest answer is “we’re still working that out.”

What isn’t complicated is our goal. Victory is being built to bring lasting economic opportunity to Fernley: new employers, new career paths, new local business opportunities with our workforce partnership with Western Nevada College to help make sure local residents are first in line for the jobs this project creates. Alongside that growth, we’re committed to investing in the kind of infrastructure and community benefits - roads, services, retail and green space - that make Fernley a better place to live.

None of that happens without trust, and trust starts with listening. So if you’ve ever wondered what’s actually happening at Victory, or what it means for your street, your water bill, or your kids’ future job prospects, now’s the time to ask.

Submit your question by scanning the QR code below or email AskVictoryProject@gmail.com. We’re listening, and we’ll answer.

LAW & ORDER

Arrest report

All information for the arrest report is provided by the Lyon County Sheriff’s Office and is considered by law to be public information.
All subjects are innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Sept. 6 - Sept. 13, 2026

JASON LOCKE –Area: Silver Springs, Bail: \$1,370, Charges: Failure to appear on traffic citation

SANDRA CURTIS – Area: Fernley, Bail: \$5,640, Charges: Drive with suspended driver’s license; Failure to appear after bail, felony crime; Failure to appear after bail, misdemeanor crime

LATRICIA DEAN – Area: Fernley, Bail: \$7,500, Charges: Obtain/possess credit/debit card without cardholder’s consent; Criminal contempt – failure to obey court order

MICHELLE MCIVER – Area: LYSO, Bail: \$0, Charges: Failure to appear after bail, felony crime

MARCELLO CASTANEDA PACHECO – Area: Dayton, Bail: \$2,440, Charges: DUI (1st); Driver disobey peace officer; Basic speed – 21–30 mph over posted limit; Open alcohol container in vehicle

TREVER POPPETT – Area: Fernley, Bail: \$20,645, Charges: DUI (1st);

Possess/sell/transfer/receive firearm without serial number (1st); Open alcohol container in vehicle; Possess/consume marijuana in public place/store/vehicle; Use/possess drug paraphernalia; Duties of driver upon approaching any traffic incident

MATTHEW BRYANT – Area: LYSO, Bail: \$10,000, Charges: Criminal contempt – failure to obey court order; Failure to appear after bail, felony crime

DANIEL MORSE – Area: LYSO, Bail: \$3,140, Charges: FTA after bail, misdemeanor crime

NATHAN LARSEN – Area: Fernley, Bail: \$12,560, Charges: Domestic battery (1st); Violation of domestic violence TPO

JORDAN JOHNSON KOWALLEK – Area: Dayton, Bail: \$220,000, Charges: Promote sexual performance of minor under 14; Lewdness by person over 18 with

child under 14; Possess visual presentation of person under 16 (1st)

ANGEL RODRIGUEZ – Area: Fernley, Bail: \$7,420, Charges: Domestic battery (1st); Violation of domestic violence EPO (1st); Resist public officer

CONNER CHRISTIAN – Area: Fernley, Bail: \$6,895, Charges: Use/possess drug paraphernalia; Drive with suspended driver’s license; Display fictitious vehicle registration/plate/title; Obtain/possess credit/debit card without cardholder’s consent

KATRINA WHITAKER – Area: Silver Springs, Bail: \$5,000, Charges: Residential burglary (1st)

CRISTIAN CASTANEDA HANSEN –Area: Dayton, Bail: \$755, Charges: Drive with revoked driver’s license; Operate vehicle with expired registration/plates

ANTHONY TRULSON – Area: Fernley, Bail: \$1,750, Charges:

Criminal contempt – failure to obey court order

CHRISTOPHER YOUNG – Area: Dayton, Bail: \$3,140, Charges: Domestic battery (1st)

CHARLES SIMONS – Area: Fernley, Bail: \$5,920, Charges: Possess Schedule I/II controlled substance under 14 grams (1st or 2nd); DUI (1st); Duty upon damaging unattended vehicle/property; Use/possess drug paraphernalia

JAMIE SPERRY – Area: Fernley, Bail: \$415, Charges: Failure to appear on traffic citation

ALEXYS ACUNA – Area: LYSO, Bail: \$0, Charges: Court commitment

LEE PETERSON – Area: Dayton, Bail: \$1,085, Charges: Reckless driving – disregard person/property safety (1st); 30–40 mph over posted limit in enhanced penalty/school zone

STEVEN SEGOVIA – Area: LYSO, Bail: \$1,450, Charges: Failure to appear on traffic citation

Continued from PAGE 3 - CIVICS 101...

least one important phone number can suddenly become very useful.

If you remain in custody, detention facilities generally provide ways to communicate with family and friends, although the systems and costs vary. These may include paid phone calls, messaging, or video visitation. Family and friends may also be able to deposit money into an inmate account for commissary and other available services.

An initial bail amount can sometimes be set before you appear before a judge. In many cases, once bail is posted, you can be released, although exceptions apply, including in some domestic battery and DUI cases.

If you cannot post bail, Nevada law generally requires a pretrial release hearing within 48 hours. Weekends count; legal holidays do not.

At that hearing, the judge is not deciding whether you are guilty. The judge is deciding whether you will remain in custody or be re-

leased and, if released, under what conditions. Under the Nevada Supreme Court’s Valdez-Jimenez decision, courts must make an individualized determination, considering factors such as your ability to pay and whether less restrictive conditions can reasonably ensure your return to court and community safety.

Depending on the timing and circumstances, an arraignment may also occur – which you must attend even if you posted bail. This is when you are formally advised of the charges and called upon to

enter a plea, but you do not have to enter one at that time. If you cannot afford an attorney, you may also qualify for appointed counsel.

What happens from there depends on the case and may include additional hearings, negotiations, a preliminary hearing, trial, or sentencing. Those are topics for another Civics 101.

For now, remember: An arrest begins the criminal justice process; it does not end it. You remain presumed innocent unless and until guilt is established.



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THURSDAYS	KIOSK SCRATCHER
FRIDAYS	10X PIONTS ROULETTE REAWARDS 5PM-9PM
SATURDAYS	KIOSK SCRATCHER SPIN TO WIN 5PM-9PM

THE INSIDE VEER

Why the best plans require a good chin

By Robert Perea

We’ve all had those weeks where we feel like we are finally hitting our stride. The calendar is organized, the routine is locked in, and the plans are laid. For a fleeting second, you believe you actually have a handle on things.

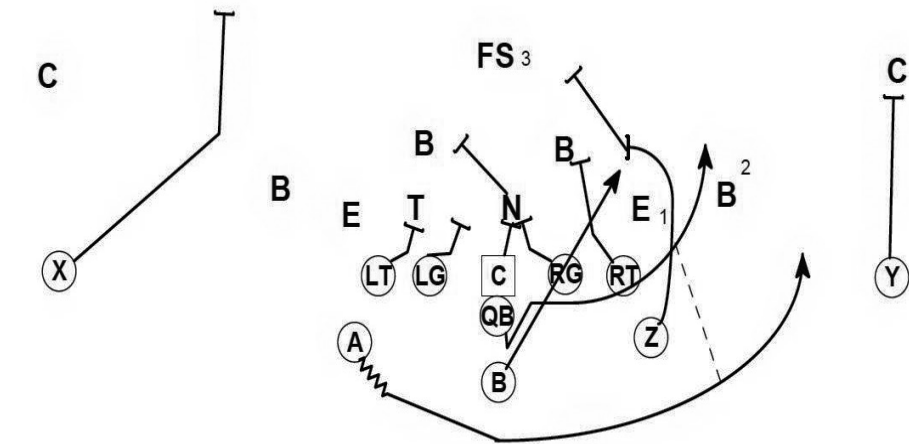
And that is precisely when life connects a left hook right on the chin.

It usually comes without warning. There’s rarely a polite email ahead of time to let you know that some sudden crisis is going to completely derail your meticulously planned day. One minute you’re cruising along at highway speeds; the next you’re standing on the shoulder of the road in the pouring rain, wondering what just happened.

Some of those tribulations are of our own making, born from overcommitment or poor choices, while others just land out of nowhere, just bad luck entirely out of our control.

Ultimately handling either scenario comes down to resilience.

In boxing terminology, resilience is often described as having a “good chin.” That isn’t a fighter who possesses some magical power to avoid getting hit, it describes someone who can take



a clean, devastating shot right on the button and somehow stay on their feet. They don’t panic when their vision blurs or their legs turn to jelly.

A boxer who is able to withstand that blow and make it through the round gets a break between rounds to regroup. Life doesn’t always give us that same kind of a break and we have to make one for ourselves.

That’s resilience, and that’s how we survive the shots we never saw coming.

Football coaches talk constantly

about winning in all three phases of football – offense, defense and special teams. When the offense stalls out, the defense has to take over to keep the team in the game.

Personal resilience works the same way. When our daily productivity and grand plans, our offense, gets completely shut down by that unexpected left hook, our defense has to take the field. Sometimes that means letting our ability to regroup, reassess and rest pick up the slack until we can steady our legs.

A teacher I had used to end class every day by telling us to “keep your hands held high and chins tucked low” and we all thought that was the hokiest thing we’d ever heard.

Some four decades later, I realize that was his way of telling us to be on guard for those unexpected blows that disintegrate our best plans and to have the chin to withstand them when they do land.

He knew what we hadn’t learned yet, that life is going to find an opening and it’s going to hit you hard. Surviving doesn’t mean learning to avoid those blows, it means learning how to absorb them and keep going.

That’s resilience, and the longer I live, the more I realize that teacher was right. No matter how good your plans might be, you’d better have a good chin.

Robert Perea has covered news and sports in Northern Nevada since 1993. He has published The Fernley Reporter online since 2016, loves music, is a sucker for the pets who have adopted him, and is thrilled to be printing the Reporter.

Fascinating Fernley: Meet your neighbor — Mark Venturacci

By Sonia Hedrick

Unlike the eastern United States and much of Europe, man-made monuments honoring northern Nevada’s history and heroes are fewer and farther between. In these parts, the successes of past leaders are more often celebrated through the lives and accomplishments of their descendants.

In the early 20th century, Italian immigrants Edoardo and Penelope Venturacci arrived in the American West with a pocketful of dreams and the farming skills they brought with them from the old country. With the advent of desert irrigation made possible by the Reclamation Act of 1902, the Venturaccis saw an opportunity and seized it.

The U.S. government made arid land available to aspiring farmers, and the couple bought as much acreage as they could afford. Over the years, the Venturaccis became one of the best-known farming and ranching families in northern Nevada.

While much of the Venturacci land has since been sold, cattle ranching remains in the family’s blood. Two grandsons continued ranching. Jeff Venturacci recently retired, but Mark Venturacci is still going strong, albeit with some modern and innovative twists.

Since Mark’s grandparents’ time, ranching has become an even more challenging venture. It was never an easy life, but today’s ranchers must have nerves of steel backed by an unrelenting passion for their profession. They face crushing overhead costs and the substantial upfront expenses nec-

essary to begin a new production cycle each year.

Combined with challenges brought by adverse weather and volatility in the economy, ranching is not for the faint-hearted. To succeed today, a rancher must be creative and innovative. As fate would have it, those are two qualities very much apparent in Mark Venturacci.

In recent years, larger beef producers have faced the erratic nature of the industry in a variety of ways. Venturacci beef has long been known for its quality. Committed to maintaining those standards, Mark and his wife, Cheryl, joined forces with ranchers Mike and Beth Schuler to form Venturacci Schuler Partners – VSP Beef.

The new business stepped away from the wholesale market, choosing instead to sell beef directly to consumers.

Rather than managing massive herds, VSP Beef focuses on roughly 100 select cattle each season, ensuring that customers receive high-quality, grass-finished beef. The cattle are pasture raised locally and provided with clean water, trace minerals, baled hay and high-grade silage during the winter.

Customers can purchase a whole, half or a quarter beef. Boxes of select cuts and ground beef are also available. Each order comes from a single animal rather than an assortment of cuts from multiple cattle.

And the formula appears to work. Venturacci Schuler Partners – VSP Beef – is in high demand, and the company’s product sells out each year. (vsp-beef.com).



Mike Schuler and Mark Venturacci. Photo courtesy of Venturacci Schuler Partners, VSP Beef

Mark’s ambition has also taken him down another related business path.

While helping a friend recover from a major illness, Mark became well acquainted with online and video livestock auctions. His friend was a sales representative for Western Video Market, one of the nation’s large cattle-marketing companies.

Mark was intrigued by the technology and the process and could immediately see its potential. When his friend retired, Mark was asked to step into the role, and he was happy to do so.

Through online communication and video, Mark now helps connect remote ranchers with buyers across the West. Mark Venturacci is a timely example

of today’s rancher. His determination reflects the generations that helped shape the western United States.

By adapting his business model to meet contemporary challenges, Mark honors the legacy of Edoardo and Penelope Venturacci not with a monument, but by carrying their work forward in a changing business environment.

Sonia Hedrick is interested in YOU! Like to share your unusual story with our neighbors? Or do you have an interesting topic you would like to explore in Senior Sense? Send Sonia an email at: shedrick-fernley@gmail.com

Continued from PAGE 3 - 9/11...

Snyder closed by challenging the community to carry the memory of the fallen forward into their everyday lives.

“May we always remember, and may we always honor them by the way we live our lives each and every day,” he said.

The ceremony also included the Fernley Patriot of the Year presentation, delivered by Sharon Serenko, who honored Fred Wilson for decades of volunteer work at the Northern Nevada Veterans Memorial Cemetery and throughout the community as a member of the Nevada Veterans Coalition. Serenko described Wilson’s extensive volunteer efforts maintaining the cemetery grounds, coordinating donated repairs and helping neighbors, calling him “an all-around good guy” and noting his well-known Christmas

light displays.

Wilson, who was surprised by the award, told the crowd he has long wondered how recipients were chosen.

“I’ve always questioned who gets this award, and now I question it even more,” he said.

He said he believes the community should have an open vote but added that he remains committed to the work that brought him the recognition.

“It hasn’t affected me because I still know what my responsibility is here,” Wilson said. “We still need that uniform. We still need to tell those families we care.”

Wilson said Fernley’s veterans cemetery has earned its reputation only because volunteers step in where staffing and funding fall short. He described visiting other cemeteries, learning what they do and bringing those practices back to Fernley.

“I applied the best and brought it back,” he said. “And I have the



Fred Wilson, The Fernley Patriot of the Year, and Sharon Serenko. Photo by Robert Perea.

right people volunteering and stepping up.”

Wilson said he was “overwhelmed, shocked, a little embarrassed” by the award. He thanked

the community and urged residents to continue supporting veterans and the cemetery.

“Let’s keep doing what we’re doing,” he said.

