The City of Half Moon Bay has created four new window signs that businesses can request if they would like to put them in their window! They are a fun, punny way to encourage people to wear face coverings, bringing a smile and some humor. Continued on page 06 »
Mudslinging DOESN'T SOLVE PROBLEMS, IT CREATES MORE

Whether it's political campaigns or disputes between agencies, once the mud starts to fly, it only makes it harder for everyone to move forward. Stating the obvious...we know.

Regardless of how obvious the statement it is, the Coastside is currently in the middle of multiple such mudslinging events where community members are prodded and pitted against one another. The unfortunate reality of mudslinging is that it pulls focus from the real problem at hand, and more importantly pulls energy from generating usable solutions. Not only do we lose the resources of the mudslingers, but we also lose the resources of the community who have now had to waste their energy sorting through it. When all is said and done, mud takes away from the goal. Imagine if all of that time, money, and smarts went to solving the problems instead?

So how do we stop mudslinging? It starts with YOU! You have a sphere of influence, and whether you've realized it or not, someone, somewhere has made a decision based on something you said or did. You influenced them. So when you find yourself on the verge of blasting someone or something online, in the newspaper, or to your friends and family, take a pause and contemplate...is it better for the community if I talk negative about this for the sake of yelling out loud...or can I start a positive conversation for possible solutions?

Guess how easy it is to incite positive conversation?! THIS EASY! Negative thought : they did this thing and they are the worst ever! Positive reworking : I don't think they made the right move there, xyz would probably work better for everyone and here is why...

Please fight the urge to throw mud. We need to work together.
WE WISH MEASURE U HAD WAITED UNTIL 2022

The reality for the hotels is that the voting community will most likely pass Measure U since it’s not a tax on them. Locals get hit so often by rate increases from every direction it’s a relief when a tax is on the other guy. However, during this pandemic, Measure U is an extra burden that HMB hotels now have to grapple with on top of everything else, and that is really unfortunate. Pre-election a 2% difference in Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) between hotels in areas was manageable. but as it inches closer to a 5% difference, the HMB hotels are going to be at a severe disadvantage. The average California TOT rate is between 10% and 12% which means most competing destinations will now be significantly lower than the hotels located inside the city limits.

Many people feel that the average traveler won’t notice the bump. Our Coastside is amazing so they will not be hindered. Possibly true, although our local hotels have already seen a rise in potential guests asking for the room rate - including taxes - where they used to just ask for the room rate only and didn’t care much about the taxes. They are shopping around, looking for deals much more than before. But the biggest problem arises in group travel. Many of our largest hotels rely heavily on corporate meetings and group travel for weddings and life events. Most locals are surprised to learn that some hotel’s have up to 60% of their annual revenue generated by groups. A 5% difference in a group quote is easy to see when they are shopping around. A group quote can be $50,000 + taxes, so for Hotel A with 15% TOT, their quote will look like $57,500, whereas Hotel B at 10% TOT will be $55,000. That $2,500 difference has no additional services associated with it can be the catalyst to turn the group towards Hotel B. The bigger the group, the bigger the divide.

Another common thought is the hotels can ‘just drop their rates’ to offset the TOT rate, keeping them competitive. Two issues with that. The first issue is that a long-term drop in rate means having less money in the budget for a hotel to operate. The price to run a hotel continues to increase, compounded by the pandemic where new safety protocols have required extra expense on tools and cleaners, so less budget means something has to give. It will unfortunately most likely come as staffing cuts. HMB hotels typically employ over 650 people and that staffing level may now take much longer to recover, if at all. The second issue is, if hotels lower their rates, the 5% TOT generated lowers along with it. Therefore the higher TOT rate will actually not create the same amount in funding as it’s projected to.

Lastly there is the biggest argument in favor of the TOT increase...tax visitors more to pay for cleaning-up after the destruction they bring*. Well, the truth of that matter is, most of the trash and traffic come from day-trippers. Most of the 4-million annual visitors drive here in the morning, bring their food with them, and leave at night. Hotel guests bring less congestion, more restaurant visits, and more shopping as they have time to stroll and explore. Visitors who stay in our hotels are the ideal travelers for our community, and the TOT increase may push them into day-trippers.

The City noted at a recent Council meeting that they do not expect to see a windfall of funds generated from the TOT increase over the next few years due to the pandemic. That the increase will provide more revenue for new or upgraded services years from now. After the election, TOT is locked in until November 2022. At that point, we expect many more cities to choose to increase their TOT, making the playing field more even. Until then, HMB hotels have 2-years of being the second highest TOT in the State during an economic catastrophe. For those reasons, we wish the TOT increase would have waited until the 2022 election.

The Chamber has a great relationship with our City officials and we have talked extensively on this issue over the last year. This is a time where we both cordially agree we fall on opposite sides of the fence...and that is OK. The Chamber and City are actively researching ideas to generate revenue from day-trippers As the largest tourism segment, and one that does not pay into TOT, it’s an underutilized revenue source.
The Pumpkin Festival’s Beautification Committee is humbled and honored beyond words that Joseph W. Cotchett has donated $200k to the committee to launch the Pumpkin Power Project ’PPP’ Support Fund and has committed another $100k as a matching donation to others able and interested in making a tax deductible donation to the fund, 100% of which is going to provide and replace the lost funding to the nonprofit community service organizations that rely on the fund-raising provided by the Pumpkin Festival.

You and your friends can donate online, pumpkinfest.miramarevents.com/donate or by mailing your check to the HMB Beautification Committee, PO Box 274, Half Moon Bay CA 94019.

We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your generosity and support as we forge on with resilience and great optimism for 2021 and a brighter future!

By CoastPride

CoastPride, in partnership with the Half Moon Bay Coastside Chamber of Commerce, City of Half Moon Bay, and Cabrillo Unified School District are in their second year celebrating October LGBTQ History Month. Since 1994, LGBTQ History Month has been raising awareness of the role of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and two-spirit people in American history. By increasing visibility, we build community and underscore the civil rights that must be safeguarded for everyone and highlight the contributions of LGBTQ people and allies. We are celebrating all month long. Check out City Hall’s windows to view posters of LGBTQ historical figures. Drop in on local businesses and receive a complimentary glass pumpkin or gourd when you donate more than $50 to CoastPride. These beautiful art pieces are popping up in all our local stores. Take home a beautiful holiday art piece today, while supporting our coastside LGBTQ youth support groups and other activities of CoastPride. If you are window shopping, be sure to notice our Welcome signs in all languages and with the logos of the Chamber, City, and CoastPride, because HMB is inclusive and welcoming to all. For LGBTQ resources, book recommendations, educational videos, check out CoastPride’s website- coastpride.org. Post to its Facebook or Instagram if you want to share what it means to you that our community is embracing LGBTQ History Month. Contact us if you would like a Welcoming Sign for your window or to display a pumpkin or gourd for the holidays!
To order an 11"x17" window sign, please contact Colleen Lettire, Communications Program Manager for the City of Half Moon Bay at (650) 750-2013 or by email at CLettire@hmbcity.com.
As we deal with the aftereffects of the fires, we are asked to remember that wildfires come fast, furious, and are extremely hard to put out. Thankfully our community agencies are all working on ways to curb fires in the future, but that doesn’t mean we can’t be prepared. Fire season has become essentially all year-round with the brunt being September to December.

From Cal Fire

**Be prepared for wildfire before it strikes by following Ready, Set, Go!**

**Be Ready:** Create and maintain defensible space and harden your home against flying embers.

**Get Set:** Prepare your family and home ahead of time for the possibility of having to evacuate. Ensure you have a plan of what to take and where to go – evacuation plans will be different this year due to COVID-19. Ask friends or relatives outside your area if you would be able to stay with them, should the need arise. If you do need to evacuate and plan to stay with friends or relatives, ask first if they have symptoms of COVID-19 or have people in their home at higher risk for serious illness. If that is the case, make other arrangements. Check with hotels, motels and campgrounds to learn if they are open.

Also get set by learning about your community’s response plan for each disaster and determine if these plans have been adapted because of COVID-19.

**Be Ready to GO!** When wildfire strikes, go early for your safety. Take the evacuation steps necessary to give your family and home the best chance of surviving a wildfire.

From PG&E

**What is a Public Safety Power Shutoff?**

High temperatures, extreme dryness and record-high winds have created conditions in our state where any spark at the wrong time and place can lead to a major wildfire. If severe weather threatens a portion of the electric system, it may be necessary for PG&E to turn off electricity in the interest of public safety. This is known as a Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS). PG&E is improving our PSPS program by making events smaller in size, shorter in length for our customers. We understand the importance of keeping the lights on, especially given the current stay-at-home orders. We are determined to do everything possible to address both the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the threat of catastrophic wildfires. Our overriding goal is to ensure public safety and Public Safety Power Shutoff is an important tool for doing so. We will attempt to contact you through automated calls, texts and emails. We will do our best to give you as much notice as possible. This year, we are updating our customer alerts about PSPS events to provide more detail earlier – including estimated time of restoration – about what to expect during PSPS events. We will also use pge.com and social media channels, and we will keep local news and radio outlets informed and updated. For updates visit pge.com.
The Chamber of Commerce and Visitors’ Bureau is a partnership of community and business professionals working together to strengthen a sustainable socio-economic climate in our unique Coastside community. This membership organization builds business relationships and represents the interests of business and community with government.