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FEATHER RIVER BULLETIN 50¢

Vol. 129 No. 44 Quincy, California 95971 (916) 283-0808 Wednesday, June 7, 1995

County condemns 25 buildings at Keddie Resort

By David H. Keller
News Editor

Plumas County officials have condemned a large portion of Keddie Resort, a once-revered vacation retreat that has fallen on hard times.

Earlier this week, county building and safety director John Cunningham sealed off 25 buildings in the community.

Among the condemned buildings is the main lodge, which once housed a hotel and 24-hour coffee shop.

Signs warning that the buildings are not safe to occupy were attached by Cunningham and his staff after weeks of discussion by county officials.

"We're trying to prevent any more of the buildings from being occupied," Cunningham said.

Although many of the occupied homes in Keddie are considered to be similarly hazardous, they were not condemned by the county because it would have displaced at least nine families — some of whom have lived in the Keddie homed for two decades.

"My feeling is that no matter how bad things are, living there is better than being on the street,"

Cunningham said.

Series of problems

The county's decision to condemn the buildings — most of which are residential units — is the latest in a series of problems for the tiny community.

State officials have attempted to shut down the resort in recent months because the community's water system has been in disrepair.

"It's been an ongoing problem for years," says Gunther Stern, spokesman for the state department of health. "It's a convoluted mess."

Stern says the system's filtering system does not work properly and that the water is possibly contaminated.

"The owner is under compulsion to make improvements," he said. "But these improvements have not been made."

In addition, many of the residents in the resort say they have refused to pay their rent for about two years because of the water and other problems.

Kicked out?

In any case, some residents say

the county's actions make them worry they will be kicked out either by resort owner Gary Mollath or the county.

"If we don't have to go, we don't want to," says Susan Johnson, who resides in one of the cabins not condemned by the county. "We don't know what's really going on at this point."

Johnson said Keddie residents probably will meet sometime this week to develop a plan to stay in their homes.

"Nine families live here," she said. "We can't just pick up our stuff and leave."

Cunningham said the county would like to place the residents there on a community housing waiting list to assist them in finding homes outside Keddie.

Keddie is about seven miles west of Quincy.

Owner's response

Mollath said he is also angered by the county's decision — but for different reasons.

In a written statement to the



More than two dozen buildings — including this structure — at Keddie Resort have been ruled unsafe by the county. Photo/David H. Keller

Dispute over tanks grows

By David H. Keller
News Editor

Critics of a plan to install new fuel tanks at school sites throughout Plumas County clashed earlier this week with district education.

The encounter — which occurred at Wednesday, May 31, meeting in Quincy — was intended as an opportunity to get residents' questions answered about a costly fuel replacement project.

But the meeting featured a series of confrontations among a handful of critics and school district officials.

District officials defended plans for the project — which could cost more than \$2 million by the time it's completed — but faced heavy scrutiny from Greenville resident Bill Watsenburg.

Watsenburg contended the Plumas Unified School District is possibly spending too much on the tank replacement project.

"You are sitting aside \$900,000 of teaching funds for underground tanks," Watsenburg exclaimed at the meeting.

He also insisted the district should not be using special engineers for much of the project because the work can be easily handled by local contractors.

Confrontations

The three-hour meeting featured several fierce confrontations be-

tween Watsenburg and Assistant Superintendent Frank Brunetti.

During one confrontation, Brunetti chided Watsenburg.

"Let us make our presentation," he told the Greenville resident.

Brunetti later added: "I think you're being argumentative... I think we're very conveniently forgetting the facts right here."

The district is scheduled to start the first phase of the tank project this summer in Greenville and Paradise.

All told, six tanks in Plumas County will be replaced this summer.

The district has allocated \$400,000 for the project, which will include the cost of cleaning up after the tanks are installed.

District officials say they hope bids for the project will be less than the estimate, which was made by a Nevada engineering firm.

Moreover, the school board has voted to place \$900,000 in a special fund to pay for the underground tank replacements and clean-up.

\$900,000 set aside

It is estimated that it will cost somewhere between \$1 and \$2.6 million to install above-ground fuel tanks, clean or remove the underground model and perform any necessary clean-up.



A fun but messy event in the Plumas County Picnic is the pie eating contest sponsored by Safeway. Competition was held in three different age categories, and all participants were soon covered with chocolate cream pie. Photo/Debra Moore

County picnic draws 5,000

By Debra Moore
Staff Writer

From homemade chili to dazzling fireworks, and from fun entertainment to cow pigs, there was something for everyone at the eighth annual Plumas County Picnic held last Sunday.

Festivities actually began the night before with Gruffin Night at Sonora's Country Barge in Quincy.

A vintage car show, lots of contests and fiddle music kicked off the county celebration.

It continued bright and early the next morning with the Lions pancake breakfast.

But the festivities had only begun

in the Plumas County fairgrounds greeted approximately 5,000 to the annual picnic.

Fair Manager Bev Woods estimated that there were more than 500 cars on display at the annual car show. About 100 of them participated in a poker run to Graceland.

Chili Cook-off

Another popular stop at the picnic was Old Towne where the Chester & Chillico Annual Chili Cook-off was under way.

Judges had a difficult time selecting the tastiest chili but ultimately awarded first place to the League of Women Voters. The

women also captured first place in the service award division.

Second place honors were awarded to Grammy and Fannie's chili cooked up by Dale Mannies and Kathy Reed.

Mike and Teri Nere captured third place with their batch of chili, but first place honors for the best decorated booth.

The People's Choice Award, voted on by 15 picnic goers, was awarded to Tom Lake and Linda Lombardi.

Pie eating

After chili there was room for a

Increase in bears is noted at lake

By Kandy Walker
Staff Writer

With an increase in recent bear sightings of black bears in the Bucks Lake area, residents there have grown concerned.

Ken Nelson, owner and manager of Bucks Lake Lodge since 1978, has become accustomed to the frequent visits by the mischievous guests.

Nelson says the bears have come into the populated area of Bucks Lake because there has been a lack of food in its own habitat.

The Sierra Nevada black bear — also known as an american — has an extensive history in Plumas County.

In 1988, Plumas County had what many called "The Year of the Bear."

According to the California Department of Fish and Game, the statewide bear population in 1986 was estimated to be between 10,000 and 12,000, with about 350 bears inhabiting Plumas County.

The bear population for 1995 is about 17,000 to 23,000, and Plumas County is now home to around 1,000 bears.

Other solutions

Alternatives to the depredation permits — which allow the big animals to be killed — have recently been offered to solve the bear problem.

see BEARS page 12

QHS ceremony is scheduled

Quincy High School seniors will graduate Friday, June 9, at 7 p.m. at the Plumas County Fairgrounds' grandstands.

Seniors were honored the evening of Monday, June 5, at the high school, for various accomplishments. (Story next week)

Search warrant thrown out in Quincy drug case

By David H. Keller
News Editor

In a decision that may require county prosecutors to seek a ruling from a district appeals court, a Plumas County judge has dismissed evidence in a felony drug case against a pair of East Quincy residents.

Judge Alan Thier ruled last week in Superior Court that there

was no probable cause to issue a search warrant in the case.

Thier — a retired judge standing in for Superior Court Judge Roger Settemiel — agreed with attorneys that the search warrant was issued in violation of the residents' right against unreasonable search.

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