



### UPDATE 2: Evacuation warning cancelled; Pleasants Valley, Cherry Glen evacuation order still in place

## Cooperative Extension expanding Solano staff, programs

By Todd R. Hansen

FAIRFIELD — Nearly 470 youth participated in various 4-H programs during the past year.

“One of the cornerstones of our work in Solano County is the 4-H Youth Development Program,” Susan Ellsworth, director of the Capitol Corridor Office of the UC Cooperative Extension, told the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday.

The program involved 467 youth – 198 from military clubs – working in four general areas: civic engagement, leadership, healthy living and STEM. There were 107 adult volunteers. STEM is an acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering, Math.

Two other volunteer-based programs are the Master Gardeners and the Master Food Preservers.

The Master Gardeners program has 148 certified volunteers who put in 4,689 hours of service and created nine demonstration gardens, while the Master Food Preservers had 29 certified volunteers who put in 1,548 hours and created 37 classes and demonstrations.

The Cooperative Extension also added Sustainable Solano as a local partner for culinary arts programs.

Still, the backbone of the Cooperative Extension remains extending the university system’s research and expertise to help farmers and ranchers in the various counties – from large operations to small farms, from crops and orchards to rangeland and livestock.

The importance of the work is obvious given what ag represents to the local, regional and state economies. The gross value of Solano County agriculture in 2020 was \$357.16 million, the county Livestock and Crop report states.

“We have eight academic advisers within areas of agriculture and pest management,” Ellsworth said. “The emphasis of these programs includes climate change adaptation, sustainable use of inputs and natural resources and reaching culture producers.”

a presentation on the past, present and future of the multi-layered, 117-year-old agency that County agriculture since its inception.

been part of the Capitol Corridor Office along with Yolo and Sacramento counties.



A UC Cooperative Extension Master Food Preservers class offers 37 classes and demonstrations taught by 29 certified volunteers. (Courtesy photo)

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“The idea was that pooling funds would enable us to more effectively leverage resources across all three counties, which, in fact, it has done,” Ellsworth said.

The 2020-21 budget for Capital Corridor is \$6.63 million, with \$900,000 in fund support from the three counties and another \$218,843 of in-kind support from the counties. Solano’s share is \$300,000 in direct contributions and \$74,823 in in-kind contributions. Yolo and Sacramento also give \$300,000 in cash contributions. Sacramento’s in-kind contribution is \$133,173; Yolo County’s is \$10,847.

In-kind is primarily facility costs and rent, overhead, copier and phone, the agency said.

The biggest share of the budget comes from the university system at \$4.06 million, with another \$1.45 million from grants, donations and other sources, the Cooperative Extension reported.

Statewide, the Cooperative Extension received a \$34 million funding boost, and Ellsworth, in response to a question by Supervisor Monica Brown, said she is hopeful that the increase support will be ongoing. Systemwide, between 100 and 110 new program advisers are expected to be hired.

“But nothing is etched in stone,” Ellsworth said.

“I’m excited about the fact that we have a little bit more money and were able to reach a little further out,” added board Chairman John Vasquez, who sits on the Capitol Corridor’s advisory committee along with county Agriculture Commissioner Ed King and a representative from the county administration.

Ellsworth said the new funding will “set the table” for program expansion, including the hiring of five new advisers in Solano County.

Among the hires will be a regional food systems adviser, an environmental horticulture adviser, a vegetable crop adviser and an urban integrated pest management adviser.

The nutrition and health program operating in Sacramento and Yolo counties also is expected to expand into Solano.

“We are very excited about this period of growth,” Ellsworth said.

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AUG 16

Local / Community

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📍 University Park Inn and Suites

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