



CAO's Corner

By Susan S. Muranishi
County Administrator

We have been happy to read the headlines about an improved economy and a surplus in the State Budget, but we can't let the optimism obscure the reality that Alameda County still faces significant budget challenges. This was made clear at an April 15 meeting of our Budget Workgroup, when it was revealed that Alameda County faces a \$67.1 million funding gap for 2014-15. Our County departments continue to grapple with cuts enacted in recent years, unabated growth in the demand for services and concerns about potential difficulties ahead. Our public safety agencies are pressed by heavy new responsibilities resulting from the realignment program initiated by the Governor in 2011. While the State provides funding to support these additional responsibilities, we continue to believe this funding does not cover our costs. Our Social Services Agency continues to see growing caseloads caused by increased needs in our community, which likely will offset any improved funding situation. And we are finding that the County's great success in enrolling uninsured residents for Medi-Cal under the federal Affordable Care Act has not erased persistent questions about how the expanded health insurance program will affect our bottom line. Already, the Board of Supervisors has allocated nearly \$10 million in additional funding to help our community based partners continue to care for residents who will not be covered under Obamacare. Other factors contributing to the funding gap include employee salary increases, rising employee benefit costs and cost-of-living increases to community-based providers. Indeed there are two sides to these additional costs. They do reflect an improved financial climate, but they also add to the challenges Alameda County faces in balancing our budget while maintaining and expanding the first-rate services the County is determined to provide our residents.

12 Honored at 2014 Women's Hall of Fame



More than 500 people attended the 21st Alameda County Women's Hall of Fame celebration on March 29 in Oakland. Pictured above are 2014 Inductees, L-R: SiLin Huang, Jennifer Krill, Deborah Ale Flint, Carol Brown, Vanessa Hanley Lordi, Liane Yasumoto, Arlene Blum, Katherine Dunphy Guzman, Agnes Ubalde and Monica Anderson. Missing from photo were Sallie T. Carey and Alba Witkin. See more on Page 3.

Alameda County Apps Challenge 2014.1

May 3rd in Dublin

Alameda County Apps Challenge 2014.1, the third County-sponsored Hackathon to expand community engagement and raise awareness about efforts to increase access to County data, will be held from **8:30 am to 7:00 pm on Saturday, May 3, 2014 at Dublin High School**. The event is expected to bring together software developers, community members, activists and entrepreneurs for a full day of creativity, collaboration and innovation. A Grand Prize of \$3000 will be awarded to the most inventive and user-friendly app that benefits Alameda County residents, businesses and visitors. A second prize of \$1500, a third prize of \$500 and honorable mentions will also be awarded. The County held its first two Apps Challenge events in December 2012 and April 2013, each time drawing more than 120 participants who built a wide range of clever and user-friendly apps. The cost to participate in Alameda County Apps Challenge 2014.1 is \$15 for general admission and \$10 for students and seniors. Government employees can participate for free. For more information, visit: <http://code.acgov.org>.

Hackathon Energizes REACH Ashland Youth Center

The REACH Ashland Youth Center hosted the YTH Health Hackathon on April 5-6, an event that brought local youth together to test their quick-thinking and creativity in a collective search for ways to improve the overall health of their community. The event – co-sponsored by REACH, YTH (youth+tech+health) and the Level Playing Field Institute – sought to bridge the digital opportunity gap for underrepresented youth and underserved communities by providing the young participants with the valuable opportunity to work with leading figures in the health and technology fields as they worked to develop their ideas on how to address local health concerns. Participants split up into eight 5-person groups to identify a health issue and brainstorm ways a mobile or web-based application could be created to address the issue. Each of the teams formally presented their ideas to a select group of judges toward the end of the second day. Event organizers said each idea showed impressive thought and creativity. When the judging was completed, an app idea called **Beaten Track** was awarded First Place. Beaten Track is an app concept that includes a system that rewards the user for doing exercise and provides coupons to be used for fresh produce. It will also use a GPS/map locator to find fresh produce.



Members of the winning team were: **Krista Henderson**, 7th grade, Emeryville; **Kat Casuat**, 21, San Leandro; **Sonny Rios**, 8th grade, San Leandro; **Edbert Dai**, 10th grade, Alameda; and **Teige Bradford**, 8th grade, Berkeley. A representative from Kaiser-Permanente brought down the house when he announced that the company would be offering \$30,000 to help the First Place Team develop its app. The team also split a \$2,500 cash prize donated by Alameda County Supervisor Nate Miley.

Volunteer Tax Program a Record Success

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, a joint effort involving the Alameda County Social Services Agency and United Way of the Bay Area, enjoyed record-breaking success this year in its annual effort to help low- to moderate-income taxpayers at tax time. In 2014, VITA shattered all previous records in the program's 13-year history. Volunteer tax preparers processed over 2,100 returns — 31 percent more than in 2013 — and returned to Alameda County's economy \$3.2 million in refunds, which is 33 percent higher than last year's total. "Each year, I am amazed by the ever-increasing volume of tax returns processed and the expertise of the volunteers," said Lori A. Cox, SSA Director. One client landed the largest tax refund in program history: \$26,218. VITA aims to help taxpayers who pay more than they can afford to have their taxes prepared and others who routinely miss out on refunds to which they are entitled.

Fresh Produce at "Dirt" Cheap Prices: Farm Stands at Social Services Offices



The Social Services Agency (SSA), along with the Deputy Sheriffs' Activities League (DSAL), has opened weekly farm stands offering pesticide-free produce at affordable prices. In partnership with Dig Deep Farms & Produce, a project of DSAL, SSA seeks to create a sustainable workforce/subsidized wage program for CalWORKs participants, while making healthy food more accessible throughout the County, especially to low-income residents. The Farm Stands are open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. one day per week at each of three locations: the Eastmont Self Sufficiency Center, 6955 Foothill Boulevard, Suite 100, Oakland (Mondays); the Eden Area Multi-Service Center, 24100 Amador Street, Hayward (Thursdays) and the Thomas L. Berkley Self-Sufficiency Center, 2000 San Pablo Avenue, Oakland (Fridays). Learn more: <http://vimeo.com/87992562>. Questions? Contact Sylvia Soublet: sos@acgov.org

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Poll Workers Needed for June Election

The Registrar of Voters office needs poll workers to help conduct the Statewide Primary Election in Alameda County on Tuesday, June 3. People can earn as much as \$190 for serving as poll workers. The duties include a mandatory training class plus service on Election Day. The County is particularly interested in hiring bilingual poll workers for the June Primary. For the first time, Alameda County elections will be supporting 9 languages: English, Chinese, Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Japanese, Korean, Khmer and Hindi. Bilingual poll workers earn an extra stipend for their service. You must be a registered voter or a Lawful Permanent Resident to work as a poll worker. High School students aged 16 and older also are eligible to serve as poll workers, as long as they are in good academic standing and obtain permission from their school. For more information, go to the Alameda County Registrar of Voters website, <http://acgov.org/rov/workers.htm>. For more information, call (510) 272-6971.

12 Honored at 2014 Women's Hall of Fame

More than 500 people attended the **21st Annual Alameda County Women's Hall of Fame** celebration on March 29 in Oakland, enjoying the inspirational stories of 12 outstanding inductees and helping to raise money for four important community organizations and the "Leading the Way" Youth Scholarship Fund. While final accounting is not complete, County Administrator Susan S. Muranishi said this year's program exceeded the highly successful 2013 event in fundraising. Muranishi attributed this success to the extraordinary commitment and creativity shown by event supporters. These supporters included District Attorney Nancy O'Malley (a 2004 WHOF inductee), who with a small group of colleagues assembled 55 stunning floral table centerpieces that were auctioned off during the event. For more information about the Women's Hall of Fame and the 2014 inductees, go to <http://acgov.org/cao/halloffame/>.

County Links

Alameda County Government <http://www.acgov.org/government/>
Alameda County Board of Supervisors <http://www.acgov.org/board/>
Lookup/pay Property Taxes <http://www.acgov.org/propertytax/index.htm>
Awards won by Alameda County <http://www.acgov.org/awards/>
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Alameda County forms <http://www.acgov.org/government/formscenter.htm>
Alameda County Superior Court <http://www.alameda.courts.ca.gov/>

For a calendar of Alameda County events, visit the County website at <http://www.acgov.org/calendar>. Also check the websites of the members of the Board of Supervisors (listed under Board contacts on the left side of this page).