



Newsletter Spring 2018

Last year was another great year for the Russian River Alliance!

Since incorporating as a non-profit, 501c3, in 2012, as the successor to Redevelopment, the Russian River Alliance has been all about building community. The Russian River Alliance is an umbrella organization comprised of community groups working together for the betterment of all. Our member organizations expanded last year and we now cover the Lower Russian River from Guerneville to Cazadero. Our members are Guerneville Community Alliance, Guerneville Neighborhoods Assn, Northwood Property Owners Assn, Monte Rio Community Alliance, and Cazadero Community Services District. We work on issues that are important to the lower Russian River community and we are action and results oriented. Unlike individual groups such as chambers, special districts, or homeowner associations, we work together providing one common voice for the entire area. As the River area changes, people are expecting better services and accountability from our government, our non-profits, and from the tax dollars we and our tourists generate.

Our current initiatives are: blight abatement (abandoned inoperable or unregistered vehicles, garbage, illegal encampments), water quality, air quality, wastewater solutions, workforce housing funding, business development/retention, tourism, infrastructure (roads), clean energy, supporting law enforcement efforts, working with other groups and government agencies to find common ground and strengthen our communities.

This year brings real change to some of our challenges. Jen Wertz has started the Workforce Housing Fund as a safety net to support and retain struggling local workers currently living, working, and contributing in our area. We received a county grant for this endeavor, but hope through community support, we can continue providing this service after the grant funds are depleted. We would like to thank Larry Boeger for donating the space and the great food for Workforce Wednesdays fundraisers (1<sup>st</sup> Wednesdays of the month at Timberline Restaurant).

We have applied to the California Air Resources Board, through a new community initiative, for assistance with our air quality issues, primarily brought about by improper burning in wood stoves.

Many of our residents and businesses will be going through a process starting later this year to upgrade wastewater septic tanks. We are involved to make sure the process is handled right, for our residents as well as for our environment.

In addition to our Workforce Housing Fund, we also support expanded Safe RV Parking facilities.

We support our County Supervisor, Lynda Hopkins. She has worked hard for our community, she is responsive, and she is trying to get us more services and funding. She is trying to help us retain more of the TOT hotel tax dollars that our community generates. She is also trying to set up a MAC (Municipal Advisory Council) for the area, which could help with more local governance by the end of the year.

This past year showed us that we have reached a critical mass. Change for the better is not only possible, but is now evident on our streets.

We provide outreach by attending meetings, by encouraging communication on Nextdoor, and through our website, Facebook, and monthly columns in the Sonoma County Gazette. Please contact us with your suggestions, concerns, and if you have the time or means, your tax deductible donations or volunteerism.

I want to thank and acknowledge our sponsors, the Heck Foundation, the DiPaola Foundation, Timberline Restaurant, and Sonoma County, I'd like to thank my fellow board members Mark Emmett and Jen Wertz for their non-stop efforts to bring about needed change in our communities. Thanks also to Joseph Silveira for volunteering his time and expertise to improving our website. Lastly, I also want to thank the leaders of our member organizations for their efforts serving their communities, as well as for their willingness to work together for the greater good. We truly are in a great place!

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