

Friday, November 20, 2020

# THE Valley Springs NEWS

Serving the communities of Valley Springs, Burson and Wallace

Published each Wednesday & Friday

Vol. 37 No. 94 1919 Vista Del Lago, Unit 8 Email: info@valleyspringsnews.com Web page: valleyspringsnews.com 772-2234

## American Legion gets nod for new contract

By Nick Baptista

American Legion Post 108 is in the driver's seat to continue being the exclusive provider of ambulance services to most of Calaveras County.

The private ambulance service out of Amador County received a unanimous vote Monday from the Board of Directors of the Mountain-Valley Emergency Medical Services Agency to begin negotiations for a new five-year contract.

In addition to American Legion, a joint powers authority of



**American Legion Post 108 is in negotiations to continue serving Calaveras County.**

Calaveras County fire districts submitted a proposal for consideration.

The county is divided into three ambulance zones. Ebbetts Pass Fire Protection District has the contract along the upper Highway 4 portion of the county, while American Legion has the contracts for the north and south zones that cover the rest of the

county. Prior to Monday's board meeting, a review committee of experts in the field of ambulance services studied the proposals submitted by American Legion and the fire districts to cover the north and south zones. The panel recommended American Legion over the fire districts. The fire districts did not protest

the expert committee's findings.

The Calaveras Consolidated Fire Protection District was one of the fire districts involved in establishing a public ambulance service for the two zones.

CalCo Fire Chief Rich Dickinson said he was disappointed with the committee's findings, but no

(See Page 2)

# Ambulance

## From Page 1

protest was lodged because the findings were not made public prior to the deadline to file a protest.

"We did not have the opportunity to know what we would be protesting," he said.

He called for more transparency in the process.

Calaveras County District 1 Supervisor Gary Tofanelli

represents the county on the Mountain-Valley board.

Since the expert committee's findings went unchallenged, the board had no other option but to accept the recommendation in favor of American Legion, he said.

He added the board's action simply paves the way to begin negotiations with American Legion on a new contract.

The board still has the ability to revise and even reject any negotiated contract, he added.

One part of the new contract will be quicker response times

from American Legion, Tofanelli said, by as many as two to three minutes per call. In addition, although American Legion has a contract extension through May 31, 2021, the new contract and any changes will supersede the extension upon Mountain-Valley board approval.

Another feature of the new contract will be GPS monitors on all ambulances to accurately track response times. As of now the ambulance service writes down its response times.

Tofanelli expects the

negotiated contract to come before the Mountain-Valley board sometime in January for final consideration. It will have the final say on the contract.

If American Legion gets the contract, Calaveras County would be off the hook to lend the fire districts \$2.6 million in seed money for start up costs.

The proposed loan had become a point of debate among supervisors in recent meetings with a slim 3-2 vote in favor of such a move the last time it was up for consideration.