

District lines will change in Calaveras

Supervisors hold 'first of many' redistricting sessions Tuesday

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By Brionna Friedrich

Calaveras County grew between the 2000 and 2010 census, but it may have been a bit lopsided, according to census data. The Board of Supervisors will hold a study session Tuesday to determine what that means for district boundaries. The county shot up by 12.39 percent to 45,578 people, but District 5 seemed to enjoy more growth than other areas. Rancho Calaveras became the most populous area in the county after growing 21.46 percent since the 2000 census to 5,325 people. Valley Springs enjoyed a 27.95 percent growth spurt to 3,553, and Copperopolis added 35.63 percent to reach 3,671 people.

Angels Camp, in District 1, grew by 21.69 percent to 3,836. In District 3, by contrast, Arnold shrank by 8.89 percent, dropping to 3,843 people. All those numbers and percentages mean that some change is probably coming to the boundaries that separate the supervisors. The county is required by state law to keep the districts as balanced as possible, with 17 to 22 percent of the population in any given district.

But it's not as simple as just drawing new lines around population centers, according to Clerk-Recorder Madaline Krska. "It would be kind of hard to tell now," Krska said, because "the attempt is made to keep communities of interest together." That would be things like school and fire districts, for example.

"A lot is involved with that whole process. It will be very public."

Krska described Tuesday's study session as "the first of

many" public meetings on redistricting. Technology Services Director Howard Stohlman stepped in to help create a few possible boundary lines for the Board of Supervisors using data from the Geographic Information System and the Planning Department.

The maps will be back the following week once the supervisors discuss how to refine them.

For state deadlines, the county has until Nov. 1 to complete the process, but Krska hopes to beat that.

"We have to have an ordinance that has to be in place for 60 days before we can make these changes, and we have an election coming up in 2012," she said. "We need these things done a lot sooner than Nov. 1." Before the public sessions start, though, Krska had no prediction on how the boundaries might change.

"It's going to be a surprise to everybody how it's all turning out, everyone will be informed at the same time," she added. The study session is scheduled to start at 1:30 p.m.

Tuesday in the board chambers at 891 Mountain Ranch Road, San Andreas.

On the regular agenda, the Coroner's Office will request \$25,000 from contingency funds for autopsies. The department has virtually expended its \$100,000 budget after performing 77 regular autopsies and two requiring a forensic pathologist. The department estimates it will have reviewed more than 200 cases by the end of the fiscal year and perform autopsies on nearly 100 of those. Four of the five supervisors must approve the budget transfer.

Public Works will request that

Jared Brown be hired as a new associate engineer at the highest salary level (E Step), which is \$34.39 an hour for that position, according to the county Human Resources website.

Typically, county employees are not hired above the C Step level, but in the board packet, staff asserts this is an exceptionally qualified applicant to fill a "critically needed position" that has been vacant. The board packet also states that the hiring will have no impact on this year's budget.

The salary range for engineers in Calaveras County is not only lower than larger or more urban counties, but other comparable rural counties. In

Calaveras, the pay range is \$28.30 to \$34.39, while in Tuolumne it is \$30.19 to \$36.86, according to a letter from Director Tom Garcia. Amador ranges from \$32.06 to \$41.97 "It is a rare opportunity to be able to hire an individual as experienced and trained as Mr. Brown," the board packet read. *Contact Brionna Friedrich at brionna@calaverasenterprise.com.*