

CALAVERAS OVERHAULS ENTERTAINMENT CODES

By **Dana M. Nichols**
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SAN ANDREAS - Calaveras County is trying to let the good times roll a little more easily.

The Calaveras County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously Tuesday to do a sweeping overhaul of its codes for special events, entertainment and one-time events such as temporary outdoor vendors. The changes eliminate much of the old code, allow many small events such as a band playing at a bar to happen with no permit at all, and reduce the cost for permits to as little as \$25 for many events.

The new rules also allow longtime events that have operated for at least 10 years - such as Murphys Irish Days in Murphys or Lumberjack Day in West Point - to avoid paying any fee for their annual permits.

That makes sense, leaders here say, considering how important good times are to the tourist economy here. Special events - whether weddings at wineries or festivals at the fairgrounds - are a huge draw for visitors. But when things go bad - as they apparently did at the Wood Whump rock festivals in Mountain Ranch the past two years - special events are also a huge headache for neighbors and taxpayers, who may get stuck with the cost of jailing drunks and directing traffic.

That's why the new rules also set stringent standards for those seeking permits for events large enough and loud enough to require extra county services - such as sheriff deputies.

Darcy Goulart, the staff planner who worked on reforming the events code, said that in general, permits for events with such significant impacts on neighbors would require months of review and cost something on the order of \$4,500.

The new events rules were triggered by a number of complaints in recent years about events such as the "Bump" festivals held at Tulloch Lake Resort and the unpermitted Wood Whomp rock festival held in Mountain Ranch.

"That's something that ought to be crushed," said Dan Dietrich, a neighbor of Wood Whomp who said he was disturbed by the three-day festival's noise last summer.

Not everyone likes the changes. Bernadette Cattaneo, manager of the Tulloch Lake Resort, said that the expensive new permit system is just the final straw for her business. "We will not be opening this year for business," she said.

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