


Lake County
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Talk of the town with board of supervisors

By Tiffany Revelle--Record-Bee staff

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LAKEPORT Highlights on the county Board of Supervisors Tuesday agenda included a response to the Lake County Grand Jury Report, a disclosure for manufactured home buyers and the annual crop report.

GRAND JURY RESPONSE PUT OFF

Board Chairman Jeff Smith decided to put off until next week the board's review of a written response to the 2006 2007 Lake County Grand Jury report, released in mid-July. The county Board of Supervisors had 90 days to respond.

Smith cited a need for more time to review the proposed response, a thick stack of paper compiled and prepared by county employee Jennifer Hammond.

The proposed response includes input from 16 department heads representing 17 departments. A letter prepared for Smith to sign upon the board's approval of the response says that while the board agrees with most of the Grand Jury's recommendations, several are too expensive to implement.

"The Grand Jury evidently did not understand the county's budget limitations and the fact that we must prioritize how the county's limited amount of discretionary funding is expended," says the letter.

The proposed response will appear for the board's review on its next scheduled



meeting, at which time the board will be able

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to make revisions and
decide whether to approve
it for submission to
Superior Court Judge
Arthur H. Mann.

DISCLOSURE APPROVED

Whether or not to include a reader-friendly disclosure of buyers' rights in the purchase of manufactured homes in Lake County was back before the board Tuesday. After hearing from several home owners who said they had experienced problems in their manufactured home purchases, the board voted to approve the disclosure.

Janice Paris and her husband Paul Frindt brought the concern to District 3 Supervisor Denise Rushing, in whose district their own manufactured home sits. Paris said she wanted to emphasize that the board was approving was an easy-to-read summary of buyers' rights that will go to a buyer the first time money changes hands.

Paris said the process of purchasing a manufactured home is a two-fold process including a down-payment of about \$1,000, then the signing of a final contract. Potential buyers, she said, will get the disclosure when the down-payment is made. "This gives them time to think about it. Currently the disclosure is only avail at time of the final signing of contract, and they have an hour to read and digest four pages of small print," said Paris.

Frindt asked for a showing of hands in the audience to give the board an idea of the need for such a disclosure. About 10 raised their hands when asked how many had encountered problems in the purchase of a manufactured home. Roughly half of those raised their hands when asked how many had paid out-of-pocket to fix the problems with their homes. Five homeowners and a retired general contractor spoke in support of the disclosure, citing a myriad of design and construction flaws with the homes installed, as well as consumer confusion regarding contracts and difficulty resolving problems.

One homeowner, Dianne Williamson, said while she agreed with the county's implementation of the disclosure, she didn't think it went far enough. Williamson said attorney fees to resolve problems with her own manufactured home may cost her up to \$75,000; her home cost \$103,000 she said.

"It's beyond ridiculous that people have to go through this," said Chairman Jeff Smith. He questioned whether the county could create tighter restrictions than existing state legislation that spells out consumers' rights.

County Council Anita Grant said while state law occupies the field in this case, she is willing to research specific areas at the board's discretion.

Rushing said the approval of the disclosure is a step in the right direction, with many more to go. "What we don't have right now is a way to wave a magic wand and make everybody obey the law.... It shouldn't be so difficult for a consumer to make a

manufacturer obey the law."

2006 CROP REPORT

The gross value of Lake County's agricultural production is up 11 percent from 2005, according to Agricultural Commissioner Steve Hajik in his annual report to the Board of Supervisors Tuesday.

Hajik attributed the rise chiefly to higher yields for wine grapes and walnuts. Wine grape value rose by 12 percent over 2005, with a nine percent increase in tonnage harvested and a two percent decrease in acreage. As for walnuts, gross value and production tons shot up 130 percent from 2005 with the price per ton virtually unchanged.

With Lake County's pears in peril in the 2006 harvest, when about 25 percent of the 2006 crop was left on the ground to rot because of a labor shortage, the gross value of the pear decreased by two percent from 2005. Total production went up by 21 percent; acreage went down by 242 acres.

Contact Tiffany Revelle at trevelle@record-bee.com.

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