Coalinga Press

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 Powered by Imaginarium: IOFA and the People of Coalinga

April 18, 2018

Hospital Town Hall Hits Home

By Mary Blyth Jones

Coalinga Press

Nearly 100 concerned residents came to hear what newly hired CEO Wayne C. Allen had to say about the critical situation at Coalinga Regional Medical Center. With an armed Coalinga police officer stationed at the door, it was clear that the situation was deemed dire by organizers.

Allen, who was hired only ten days prior to the meeting, had assessed the financial status of CRMC and already formulated a strategy to help the struggling hospital. He has been working toward a comprehensive plan to salvage the facility without having to close its doors.

Community members, hospital staff, vendors and the hospital board all sat in the lobby of the pavilion building where chairs had been placed, along with a table supplied with cookies and iced lemon-water. The meeting had originally been planned to be held in the board room but it was decided that possibly more folks would attend the meeting than would comfortably fit into the room.

Although many exchanged warm greetings with others seated nearby, residents braced themselves for the news. At six sharp, CRMC Board President Sandy Beach officially opened the meeting by introducing Wayne C. Allen to the community.

Allen addressed the crowd with candor, addressing the most severe and drastic concerns facing CRMC and the residents of Coalinga.

In a separate interview prior to the town hall, Allen discussed many of those issues with Coalinga Press.

"After careful financial assessments, it is important to set realistic goals. After sharing the bad news," Allen hesitated, "I will emphasize the positive." With nearly $4.2 million of current debt, CRMC has continuously functioned in the red for 11 of the past 12 months.

"There is no way for us to survive that sort of loss without savings to cushion the loss," said Allen. "There just isn’t enough money to cover that amount of losses. It isn’t sustainable."

-CFO Wayne C. Allen

"We understand the importance of youth engagement and encouraging the longevity of this industry through collaboration, media, jobs, development and local interaction."

Dr. Charles Douglas

"This is a great opportunity to showcase some of the industry leaders while giving back to the community," said Brian Lounsberry, CEO of Motovicity distribution.

"Access to local health care services is critical," said Allen. "Local health care may not offer all the aspects of treatments needed in a community." Again, Allen paused. "We can provide treatment and patient care services and out-patient services such as lab, x-ray, physical therapy and emergency care.

CRMC also provides care for extended care for those in patients needing extended care skilled nursing services.

CRMC Board Members were silent for much of Coalinga’s Town Hall meeting last week. From top: Catherine Underwood, Sandy Beach, Diane Gramse, Dr. Charles Douglas and William Lewis.

NEVER LIFT 1/2 MILE BATTLE!

Motovicity Distribution, an after market automotive performance distributor from Detroit, MI is bringing a half-mile top-speed airstrip battle called Never Lift to the New Coalinga Municipal Airport on April 28th and 29th.

Motovicity, with a title sponsorship from ARP, is collaborating with Shift-S3ctor for the event, which has held events in Coalinga since 2012. Half-mile racing has grown in popularity among the racing community over the past few years. In addition to the competitiveness, it allows drivers to take their car out and run it as fast as it can go in a half-mile controlled environment.

Because of the space needed to safely bring the car up to such high speeds and then safely slow down, half-mile races are typically held on airport runways similar to New Coalinga Municipal Airport.

Never Lift will cater to the engagement of all aspects of the grassroots racing community. Manufacturers, dealers, shops, racers, enthusiasts and the media will come together for this event that embodies after market performance.

This family-friendly event will host more than 200 cars that will race for top speed and over $35,000 in cash prizes. Cars will reach speeds topping 200 mph and each day will be action-packed from the first race.

Never Lift will also have a positive impact on the local economy. Never Lift has partnered with the Harris Ranch Inn & Restaurant to host the hundreds of guests that will be attending and racing at the event.

The event has also tapped into local resources through the City of Coalinga and the Community Scholarship Alliance, to staff, provide food, beverages and entertainment for the weekend.

In efforts to further engage the local community, Never Lift is offering coupons exclusively through the Coalinga Press to be redeemed for free admission.

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CRMC Board Members were silent for much of Coalinga’s Town Hall meeting last week.

From top: Catherine Underwood, Sandy Beach, Diane Gramse, Dr. Charles Douglas and William Lewis.
Coalinga city council meetings are never boring but this week’s meet- ing Thursday night at 6 PM promises some interesting presentations. Beginning with a presentation from PG&E with regards to the BF Sisk Foun- tain, the community will hear about the repairs and situation with Coal- inga’s recently repaired monument. Immediately following this will be an introduction of Wayne C. Allen, Coalinga Regional Medical Cen- ter’s new Chief Executive Officer. Coalinga Area Chamber of Com- mercial Executive Director Benjamin Kahikina will also be introduced and he will likely discuss the horned Toad Derby just one month off.

The city must include a list of all proj- ects proposed to receive funding from the road maintenance and rehabilita- tion account (RMRA), created by SB 1, in the city budget, which must include a description and the location of each proposed project, a proposed schedule for the project’s completion, and the es- timated useful life of the improvement.

This phase of the projects include:
- Installation of curb and gutter
- Installation of sidewalks
- Installation of curb ramps to comply with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements
- Driveway approaches
- Alley approaches
- Valley gutters
- A.C. pavement
- Repair aggregate base
- Storm drain laterals
- Storm drain inlets
- LED street lights
- Electrical conduit
- Electrical wire
- Pull boxes
- Crosswalks
- Traffic
- Striping and markings
- Traffic signage
- Bike lane
- Striping
- Existing utility lid adjustment
- Street tree removal or trimming
- Construction surveying

Road Repairs

Senator Bill 1, the Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017, was passed by the legislature and signed into law by Governor Brown in April 2017. This bill ad- dresses the multi-modal transporta- tion funding shortfalls statewide. The new transportation bill will gener- ate $54 billion over the next decade, split between state and local agencies. The bill includes accountability and transparency provisions that will en- sure the residents of Coalinga are aware of the projects proposed for funding in our community and which projects have been completed each fiscal year.

Starting in March of 2017, Coalinga completed the $28 million multi-use active transportation plan which included 18 separate multi-use trails. The loop trail will allow residents who walk or bike to connect with nature, lead a healthier lifestyle through exercise, meet and socialize with neighbors, and have a comfortable choice for getting to school or running errands without needing to drive. (Public agenda cover sheet)

The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) grant program ad- ministered by the Fresno County of Governments (COG) are federal funds used for projects that support alterna- tive transportation in addition to reduc- ing particulate matter and improving air quality. The CMAQ program has a regional competitive grant process and an entitlement program component. The City has the opportunity every 2 years to apply for grant money in addition to receiving entitled funds (lifeline funds).

Coalinga currently has $685,000 in CMAQ lifeline funds held with COG with an additional $152,000 coming to the city from the 2017 call for projects for a total balance of 837,000. (calcog.org)

In 2017, Coalinga applied for $479,000 in funding to complete segments 10, 11 and 12 of the City’s Multi-Use Trail System and is being recommended for funding by the COG Selection Commit- tee. The project scope is from Lu- cille to Cambridge Ave on Monterey. Staff would like to continue these ef- forts with segments 13 and 14 which are the two segments that go through the Sports Complex on Cambridge Ave where the Coalinga Huron Recreation and Park District is expected to proceed with construction of new field balls and concessions in the near future.

More Road Repairs

$108,500 of Surface Transporta- tion Block Grant (STBG) Lifeline Funds to expand the scope of work for the Polk Street improvement proj- ect from Elm Avenue to 5th Street.

Federal and state transportation funds for STBG are distributed through a com- petitive grant process from the Fresno COG every two years. The City of Coal- inga submitted an application for grant funds for one priority project (Polk Street from Elm Ave to 5th Street). The City has been tentatively awarded $396,000 in funding for a reduced scope project from 5th to Forest. Staff would like to use lifeline funds through the STBG program to fund the full scope project to include Forest to Elm Ave.

Coalinga currently has $182,000 in STBG lifeline funds with an additional $294,000 being set aside for the City for the 2017 funding cycle. Staff would like to allocate $108,500 to fully fund the Polk Street reconstruction proj- ect from Elm Avenue to 5th Street. The Polk Street reconstruction project includes grade in place roadway recon- struction, ADA sidewalk improve- ments and bicycle lane striping from 5th Street to Forest Street on Polk Street.

Multi-Use Trail

In March of 2017, Coalinga completed the $3 million multi-use active transportation plan which included an 8 mile multi-use trail master plan made of 14 different trail segments. The loop trail will allow residents who walk or bike to connect with nature, lead a healthier lifestyle through exercise, meet and socialize with neighbors, and have a comfortable choice for getting to school or running errands without needing to drive. (Public agenda cover sheet)

City Council has monster agenda

The County of Fresno on behalf of the Coalinga Area Chamber of Com- mercial is having the May Memorial Day Horned Toad Derby Parade.

The City of Coalinga was awarded a Water Efficiency Block Grant (WEBG) $98,000 to fund a 32-inch water main replacement. The new water main will replace an existing water main line that was about to be replaced by PG&E with regards to the BF Sisk Fountain. The replacement line will be through Wildcat Way and Coalinga Ave.

For Coalinga Press

Holly Henderson and Nicole Blevins will be honored as Diplas. of the Month for March 2018 long with the staff and partners of the Coalinga Police Explorers Kait Secrease, Angel Ayala, Miranda Ayala and Jordan Roas.

Police Explorers Kait Secrease, Angel Ayala, Miranda Ayala and Jordan Roas.

The City Council has monster agenda
Berkey again emphasized that his conclusion.

"It's not easy to sit on a board. None of these people sit up here to do bad things to us. I appreciate the board listening and having this town hall meeting. It's no fun to listen to people complain." Vosburg explained that there are three communities involved here, not just Coalinga. Pointing out that Av- enal and Huron are just as needy for services provided by CRMC, he expressed that if all three communities came together and utilized the facility, it would be able to remain open.

"I'll do my best to advertise those services to everyone. We have two ambulances in Coalinga. But Avenal and Huron also use those ambulances." Vosburg ex- plained that if patients need to be transported to other medical facilities, the wait for an ambulance could be catastrophic in some circumstances.

"We need to trust the hospital. We need to stand up and give them a chance. We all need that chance and I am going to do what I can to make sure that happens." Vosburg worked with other city leaders to host another meeting Monday morning to learn more about ways to be involved and help CRMC move forward with plans to improve capabilities and solvency.

At one time, CRMC had a great source of revenue as it treated many of the ailments and illnesses of prisoners housed at Pleasant Valley State Prison. Several years ago the state went through budget cuts and found that they could save a large amount of money by setting up space in the prison for treatment. This saved in transportation, the number of guards needed on site, and ease of access. When the Stockton prison opened up, they took all of the more needy medical patients and those needing long-term skilled nursing in the PVSP.

"I won't sit here and talk about all this stuff. I don't want that. I want to speak to everyone's comments, and complaints. It brings to my attention that these comments may not have been brought to the board. These are the people who matter, and can make changes and improve- ments. "So I ask you, please, it's in- herent in your planning to have better communication between the community, the hospital board, and whoever else is going to help out with that problem." Dlores Crabtree brought up a concern many Coalingans share. When arriving for needed care at CRMC's emer- gency room, they would like to see a familiar face.

"Will you, the board, work with the local doc- tors? Crabtree continued. "And our local nurses?" When we come into the hospital, we know them, and we trust them. And they know us. Please, will you work with the local doctors?"

"I want to speak to everyone's com- ments, and complaints. Things will change. Don't let go of some of this baggage and get rid of it. We need improve- ment. If the hoped for affiliation doesn't come together, the hos- pital will probably close and we won't even need to worry about all this stuff. I don't want that." -CEO Wayne C. Allen

When CEO Wayne Allen men- tioned how difficult it is to at- tract and keep medical personnel to an area like Coalinga, Cherrie Rob- erts responded with her own story. She is a registered nurse. She came to Coalinga as a traveling nurse and worked at CRMC in that position. She would love to become a regu- lar employee at CRMC.

She has gone through the application interview process more than once but was told her papers were lost when she inquired about employment. When she had an appointment with former CRMC CEO about the situa- tion, Spurgeon report- edly failed to keep the appointment.

"I'm local, and I'd be happy to work here," said Roberts.
Mary Frances Yewdall
April 19, 1930 - April 9, 2018

Another angel was taken from us on Monday, April 9, 2018 named Mary Frances Yewdall. Born April 19, 1930 in Spring Township, Illinois, Mary was the first child of three born to Russell and Leone Lander.

Russell was a county agricultural agent who also instructed World War II veterans in farming techniques, and Leone was a nurse and mid-wife. Mary, along with her two younger brothers William (Bill) and Edward (Eddie) lived on the family farm in southern Missouri, that had no electricity or running water until two years after Mary graduated from Richland High School in 1947.

After graduating high school, Mary attended Central Missouri State at Warrensburg for her freshman year, transferring in her sophomore year to Southwest Missouri State (SMS) in Springfield, Missouri, which is now Missouri State University, where she met her husband, Robert (Bob) E. Yewdall, Jr. [Bob passed away on September 13, 2016].

During her high school days, Mary could always be counted on to assist with the musical shows and concerts as well as at her home church of First Baptist Church in Waynesville, MO where she also married her life partner, Bob Yewdall on November 24, 1949. After their wedding, Mary and Bob worked on their educational degrees in Springfield as well as looking after her younger brother, Eddie (12 years younger than Mary) with the assistance of her older brother, Bill (2 years younger than Mary) when her mother fell very ill.

On October 30, 1950, Bob and Mary were blessed with their only child, David Lewis Yewdall [who passed away July 4, 2017 of pancreatic cancer, in Winston-Salem, NC].

After teaching first graders at a country school near Dixon, MO, Bob and Mary and David moved to California in 1954, so Bob could use his teaching degree at Coalinga Elementary School, where he taught for 38 years. Mary, who did not complete her teaching degree, substituted near Huron, CA for 1 – 2 years. Mary then proceeded to put her varied art and music talents to work designing decorations and delightful home cooked meals for round musical events in area churches and schools as well as West Hills College in Coalinga. She also lent her singing talents (many along with Bob and David) as well.

In their twilight years, Mary and Bob stayed close to home in Coalinga. Mary was baptized into the Lutheran faith in Waynesville in 1931. She received and gave love in every event, and every event was a joy. She was blessed with their only child, David Lewis Yewdall who passed away July 4, 2017 of pancreatic cancer, in Winston-Salem, NC.

Mary's enthusiasm would also add to the festivities of the seasons with her decorations and delightful home cooking.

After the Coalinga’s earthquake of 1982 Mary’s love of cats was honored by a local poet who titled the poem, The Cat Lady of Coalinga. It paid homage to her for feeding and taking care of the many misplaced kittens and cats. She used West Hills College as a temporary shelter. Every evening, Mary would take enough food up the street to feed more than 50 cats and kittens who knew the time she would arrive on campus. To see more than 50 pairs of cat eyes light up from the ambient light as they recognized her footfall, was indeed an event.

Each group of cats knew the place they would be fed and that all of the kittens were fed first. As cautiously as the cats came, they returned to the shadows until the following evening when feeding time returned and so did Mary.

Mary and Bob also did their best to get the “college cats” as they were known, spayed and neutered so the cat population wouldn’t increase.

In their twilight years, Mary and Bob stayed close to home in Coalinga. Mary was baptized into the Lutheran faith in the 1990s, and when the Episcopal and Lutheran congregations merged, Mary became the overall choir director.

The past few years, Mary and Bob have lived in assisted housing in Fresno. Mary is survived by her daughter-in-law, Lisa Howes Yewdall who is living in Winston-Salem, NC and her brothers, William Lander, of Clever, MO and Edward Lander of Collinsville, IL.

Mary will be laid to rest next to her husband Robert in Mountain View Cemetery in Fresno, CA. A slideshow of Mary’s life is available at www.wildrosechapel.com
Coalinga Girls basketball will award an exemplary player with our weekly “Gym Rat Award!” The award will be given to a player who works harder than most during the off-season and grows and excels their game. “We need this kind of motivation,” said Coach Mike Walker. “We don’t have the tentacles that go year round like softball and wrestling and it takes work to inspire and motivate our players. This award will be given to players who continue to show up and work hard on a consistent basis!”

Our first player will be announced next week and then weekly thereafter. If you’re interested in getting your daughter “Gym Rat” status, contact Mike Walker at 707-6425.

Coalinga boys got 2nd place overall for varsity at the Sunnyside sprint meet. Above, left to right Garrison Price, Brett Wong, Bryce Wong and Jaron Smith. Below, Coalinga swimmers who made finals at the meet, (left to right) Beta Chandler, Sydney Ruth, Gillian Chandler, Garrison Price, Bryce Wong, Brett Wong and Jaron Smith.

Romario Lopez, nine-years old, placed 5th at Reno World’s Nationals. The fourth grader began wrestling at the age of three. He is coached by his father Cassidy Lopez of the Coalinga Roughnecks. He thanks all his coaches and team mates for supporting him in Reno.

 Paige Martin, hitting a hard left.

CHS SOFTBALL vs Firebaugh winning 15-3 Coalinga

Cen Cal Extreme 12u Coalinga Lola Martin hard hit to left field. (Above)

Miyah Reeves
(Left)
Submitted by Sal Flores

CHS TV softball took 2nd place at a tournament on 4-14.
Photo submitted by Melissa Cleveland.

Apologies for names not being included on photographs. Coalinga Press is new, and the learning curve is extreme. It has also been a challenge to reconnect with sources for photos and stories. That being said, our readers’ patience and encouragement are more meaningful than you might expect. I do not want the goal of “sophistication” or polished product to interfere with communication and necessary comments. Coalinga is a small enough town that I think it’s pretty clear that I will do my best, hope for the best and express gratitude for each day. Thank you for your patience.
Looking for affiliates. Allen hopes to build “economies of scale.” This refers to being able to be more efficient with less resources. An example of this in the hospital are sharing resources with other facilities and only using a specialist one or two days a week rather than hiring that individual as a full-time staff member. By sharing that resource with another site, the cost share is lower and CRMC would be paying only for the service needed.

“Medical personnel is in short supply nationally,” said Allen. “A small community compounds the problem when there is already a shortage.”

In an economy where there is a demand for medical personnel, it is far more unlikely that most individuals would choose a small, isolated town.

“We need to hook up with a larger system,” suggested Allen, “and tap into their resources with staff sharing. Shared service resources give greater access to personnel.”

After laying out these facts at the meeting, Allen hoped to encourage residents to focus on a new business model:

During the meeting Allen discussed these issues and plans in a limited manner, choosing to open the discussion for questions and concerns from those attending the meeting.

The meeting lasted two hours and meandered through several memorable fiascos experienced by various individuals who were disgruntled at what had happened to them or their family member at CRMC.

Although board members for the most part, sat quietly, it was obvious that they were listening to the many stories, and took to heart the passion and concern expressed by the community.

Similar meetings are planned for Huron and Avenal.

CRMC

It’s a new beginning for Coalinga Regional Medical Center.

With CEO Wayne C. Allen directing the facility, changes are immediate and definite. Strong leadership and decisive action has already brought about improvements to the facility.

LOCAL SERVICES

• Full Laboratory services
• Radiology
• Ultrasound
• CT Scan
• MRI
• Acute care
• Long Term Nursing Facility

This is OUR hospital.
We have the lifetime opportunity to regroup and show support to the new leadership of our medical facility.

Business Licenses

What is a business license and who needs them anyway?

When Coalinga city staff began cracking down on local vendors at craft fairs and other events, many of those residents complained about harassment and ridiculous demands.

Coalinga city council, however, had voted to waive the cost of business licenses for all home occupations in the city. Council members hoped that this move would encourage formerly unlicensed vendors, artists, crafters and marketers to acquire licenses for the city of Coalinga.

There are several reasons that any city would want businesses to have local licenses. Nearly every city in California requires some form of licensing in order to conduct business in that town.

One important reason to have a license is to make sure your business is unique in its name. This serves to identify who, exactly is doing business. The license will also keep your business and activities separated from anyone else who may have a similar name, product or service.

Of course, no one sets out to provide sub-standard products or services, but in the event that this happens, it is equally important to know who is responsible.

A business license can easily identify each vendor or service provider. It can offer protection from a client who might have false claims against your business. Your license will hold you responsible for your actions and practices as well as separate you from others who may be similar.

A business license also helps the city make sure that the public is protected sure that the public is protected against health and safety violations by having a set of guidelines needing to be followed. The third reason is important to the community. By keeping track of your finances, you can be certain that your tax donations go to your community for improvements and maintenance projects. Almost all civic projects and general maintenance are financed by taxes from one source or another. This is so vital that in some cities, a business license is actually called a tax certificate.

After waiving license fees for a year, Coalinga city council decided to waive business license fees for new businesses for a period of one year beginning on February 2, 2017. During the waiving period there were a total of 164 new business licenses issued. They were issued in the following categories: Contractor 59, Derby 22, General 27, Hair Dresser 2, Home Occupation 51, Professional 2, Temporary 1. Total 164.

58 of the 164 waived business licenses issued have renewed their business license for 2018.

The business license issue is scheduled to be discussed by Coalinga city council members this Thursday.
Rural Health Clinic

Coalinga’s Rural Health Clinic sits on the northern edge of CRMC’s health facilities. Offering complete care for all residents, the clinic is open seven days a week, 9 AM - 7:30 PM. They close for lunch 12 PM - 12:30 PM.

- Routine Checkups
- Immunizations
- Disease Management
- Regular Screenings
- Medicare Wellness Exams
- Sports Physicals

Our Mission
The mission of Coalinga Regional Medical Center is to provide compassionate, innovative and accessible first-rate quality healthcare services for Coalinga and surrounding communities and to consistently promote wellness, relieve suffering and restore health.

Our Vision
Coalinga Regional Medical Center will be the first choice in health care for our community.

Ambassadors continued

a selection process and ten ambassadors would be selected. The minimum age requirement to be an ambassador would be fourteen. There would be no maximum age limit.

Ambassadors would meet from 12 PM to 1PM the first and third Thursday of each month with City Manager, Marissa Trejo.

The city of Coalinga will provide lunches at the meetings and also supply each ambassador with an official City of Coalinga shirt.

Ambassadors would be required to commit to volunteering a minimum of ten hours per month in order to stay active as an ambassador.

Ambassadors may volunteer up to 19 hours per week.

Ambassadors will be assigned tasks based on their areas of interest within the scope of Administrative functions.

Not only would this program help meet the council’s goal of civic engagement, it would also provide work experience opportunities to the community, assist Coalinga in addressing major needs that are currently lacking with reduced staffing at a minimal cost, and allow the city to better serve the public.

Subscriptions are for one year donations. Coalinga Press has an online lite version of material at coalingapress.org.

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Coalinga Press is sponsored by Imaginarium: Institute of Fine Arts a registered 501 (c)(3) nonprofit, locally owned and run since 2007.

Send your pet photos to coalingapress@gmail.com

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559-362-9668
Three of the five CRMC board seats will be on the ballot next fall. The position is open to all residents. Contact Fresno County Elections to see if you qualify to run.