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The Modesto Bee



Who, what will be on Stanislaus County primary ballot June 2?

BY KATHLEEN QUINN
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The filing period for the 2026 primary election has closed, solidifying who and what will be on the local ballot for Stanislaus County voters June 2.

The local races will include a lot of familiar names. Almost all candidates are running unopposed, including the auditor-controller, the superintendent of schools, the county clerk-recorder and all local judges.

Though a candidate initially did submit a signature-in-lieu

petition to run against incumbent Terry Withrow for the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors District 3, the person ultimately was unable to meet the qualifications to file.

Contested races include the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors District 4, where

incumbent Mani Grewal will be pitted against Jennifer Anne Valenzuela, a provider of in-home supportive services.

Salida voters will decide on whether to approve a special \$168 annual tax on residents that would be used for fire and emergency services.

COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS District 3:

- Terry Withrow, incumbent, accountant, running unopposed

SEE BALLOT, 3A



ANDY ALFARO aalfaro@modbee.com

Matt and Sarah Beekman at their property in Hughson, Feb. 26. The third-generation beekeepers operate a commercial beekeeping business in Hughson.

With another center, Amazon boosting local employment

BY KEN CARLSON
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Amazon is expanding its presence as a large employer in Stanislaus County.

The e-commerce giant confirmed last week it will operate a same-day fulfillment center in the 316,800-square-foot industrial building at Kiernan Avenue and Tully Road in north Modesto. The other two Amazon distribution centers in the county are more than three times larger.

The Patterson fulfillment center created a stir when it opened in 2013, even though it is 17 miles west of Modesto, not far from Interstate 5. The center, called OAK3, covers 1.1 million square feet and has 66 loading dock doors. A California Department of Transportation report in 2023 estimated the center has 2,500 employees.

Amazon's Turlock fulfillment center expected to hire up to 1,500 employees when it was christened in October 2022. Called MCE1, the 1.1 million-square-foot facility is about the same size as the Patterson center.

What may become the king of distribution centers in the region was approved as "Project Zach" last year in Patterson. The proposed building will have five stories and 3.23 million square feet of space, at the southwest corner of Rogers and Zacharias roads.

Amazon hasn't confirmed a connection to the project, but stories in local publications and on social media are calling it the "Amazon center." The massive e-commerce facility is expected to boast the most advanced automation and technology.

The plans include parking spaces for 983 cars and more than 500 trailers. About 1,500 employ-

SEE EMPLOYMENT, 3A

Health of Central Valley orchards owes a lot to bee business

BY MARIA FIGUEROA
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As spring approaches, trees begin to bloom, and the iconic almond blossoms adorn the farmland throughout the Central Valley. People come from miles around to take photos in pinkish-white orchards and drive through flowery roads.

It is something valley residents take pride in, and something achieved only by hard-working bees and bee people.

The Beekmans are among those people. As owners and operators of Beekman's Bee Feed, Matt and Sarah continue to foster the health and advancement of bees and bee products with their commercial beekeeping business.

It started with Matt's family. "My grandfather started keeping bees in the 1920s, so we've been here for over 100 years now," he said.

As a third-generation beekeeper, Matt at first was not sure he would go into the fam-

ily business. He would return home to help with it while studying at UC Berkeley.

Cal is where he met Sarah Kelly. "I grew up in a Northern Ireland pub family. Did I ever think I would be sitting in California talking about beekeeping? No," she said.

They married right after college, and both worked in the corporate world for a while, Matt in international trade and Sarah in tech, working in patent litigation. "There's always been a strong pull to come back and

be with the bees," he said, so around 25 years ago, the couple moved from the Bay Area back to Matt's native Hughson to take over the family business.

Matt recalled their honey and bee product sales in the early days of the business. "People still tell me stories of coming here and buying honey in a five-pound glass jar and then putting the money in another little glass jar. It was a complete honor system, and

SEE BEE BUSINESS, 4A

2 adults, 2 children killed in crash ID'd; 2 kids survive

BY DEKE FARROW
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On social media, family members and friends have identified the four killed in a crash east of Riverbank on Sunday as Adrian Solorio, his wife, Brenda Cisneros, and their two youngest children. A GoFundMe account, titled Familia Solorio, has been established.

Shortly after 3 a.m. Sunday, crews were dispatched as reports came in of a solo-vehicle crash on the Oakdale-Water-

ford Highway north of Claribel Road, with the vehicle on fire, according to a Modesto Fire Department incident summary.

Emergency personnel found four people trapped in the car, the summary says.

Two others got out of the vehicle and were able to walk. Both were taken to a local hospital, and one was then flown out of the area for further treatment. The two are expected to survive, Battalion Chief Jim Black told The Bee.

All four people trapped in the car were declared dead at the

scene, the summary says. The California Highway Patrol is handling the investigation.

CHP Modesto office spokesperson Officer Tom Olsen told The Bee that the preliminary investigation found that the driver of a 2014 Dodge SUV was traveling north on the Oakdale-Waterford Highway. For undetermined reasons the vehicle went off the road and struck a concrete pillar near an irrigation canal.

The vehicle immediately became fully engulfed in flames, Olsen said.

Two adults and two children, ages 2 and 5, died in the SUV. Two other children, a 12-year-old girl and 7-year-old boy, self-extricated, Olsen said.

The older child, who suffered major burn injuries, was taken by air ambulance to the UC Davis Medical Center in Sacramento. The 7-year-old was treated locally for moderate injuries.

Release of the identities of the children killed is pending notification of family by the Stanislaus County Coroner's Office.

It is unknown if drugs and/or alcohol contributed to this crash. Oakdale-Waterford Highway was closed during the investigation of the scene. Motorists were detoured through the area with minimal delay.



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