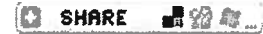


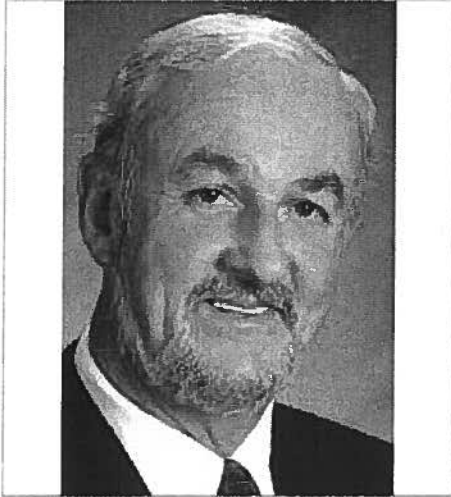
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## Three to D.C. to push for Placer Parkway, Auburn State Recreation Area support

By Gus Thomson, Journal Staff Writer



Jim Holmes



A trio of top Placer County officials is bound for Washington, D.C. for four days in February to lobby for federal support on a bevy of local projects.

County Executive Officer Tom Miller will join Supervisors Jim Holmes and Robert Weygandt on the Feb. 14-17 trip. They'll meet with federal elected and appointed officials to discuss legislative and regulatory issues.

The Capitol visit has become a yearly part of the board's duties, with from two to four supervisors joined by the CEO on recent trips. This year's estimated costs for each supervisor, including travel, lodging and incidental expenditures are about \$1,200 to \$1,500 – down from last year's \$1,625, when Uhler also took part.

Newly-installed as board chairman, Weygandt said he's observed in his 16 years as supervisor that the trip helps build relationships with decision-makers in Washington.

"There's no question in my mind that it's an investment well-made," Weygandt said.

Two years ago, supervisors became embroiled in controversy after the Journal revealed a \$1,600 dinner attended by Miller, Chief Deputy CEO Rich Colwell and supervisors Jim Holmes, Rocky Rockholm and Robert Weygandt. The \$1,600 dinner, including a \$300 tip, was courtesy of Placer County taxpayers and took place during the February 2007 trip to Washington. It was described as an "appreciation" for then-U.S. Rep. John Doolittle.

Allison Carlos, of the county executive office, said the schedule was still being set for this year's trip and no other staff members, including aides, were expected take part. Carlos said Wednesday she didn't know what dinner plans were being made this year for the trip.

Carlos reported to supervisors Tuesday that Holland and Knight, the county's lobbying firm in Washington, continues to emphasize the importance of Placer leadership speaking directly with legislators and the staff of agencies, particularly as funding tightens.

"To put a fine point on the benefit to the county of these trips, over the past 10 years, \$105 million in funding has been secured for key regional projects," Carlos said.

The county's list of programs funded includes more than \$71 million for Interstate 80 "bottleneck" widening, \$10 million for regional wastewater treatment plant work, \$5 million in law-enforcement communications upgrades and \$4 million for the Lincoln-Highway 65 bypass.

Transportation needs are high on the county agenda, with the county seeking \$25 million for the future Placer Parkway near Roseville, as well as ongoing funding for Interstate 80 improvements, county bridge replacement projects and Kings Beach commercial core revitalization.

Supervisors will also be seeking meetings on supporting permanent federal funding for the management of the Auburn State Recreation Area.

Holmes said Wednesday that the 31,000-acre recreation area is being threatened by funding shortages but he'd like to get help at the higher levels of government.

"It's bigger than just the U.S. Department of the Interior," he said.

Holmes said he and the others will be going to dinner but doesn't expect to sit down again to a meal paid for by the county similar to the 2007 spread.

"We will have dinner but we pretty much low key it," he said. "But we will be going to dinner."