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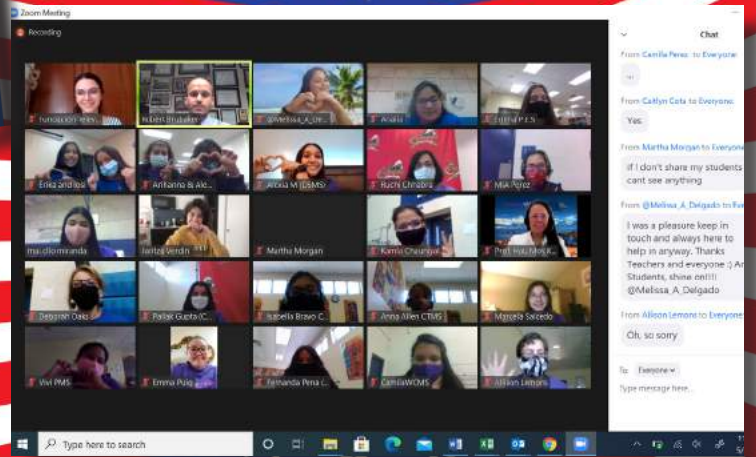
# ecco



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People who "echo" in Education  
Cynthia Matus Morriss

## CONNECTING SOUTHERN ARIZONA



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# HAPPY FOURTH OF JULY!



**Alfredo I. Velásquez**  
**Santa Cruz County School Superintendent**  
**&**  
**Staff**

**2150 N. Congress Dr. #107**  
**Nogales, AZ 85621**  
**Phone: 520.375.7940**

For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others. -Nelson Mandela



# Border Eco Updates

We want to thank our readers and customers for their continued support. Your support helps us report on the great people, events, and organizations who make a difference in our community.

Our goal is to help connect Santa Cruz County. Santa Cruz County is a unique bordertown rich in culture, and traditions. We are here to support our community.

Please send us any information on any upcoming community events, meetings, or conferences.

Don't forget to follow us on Facebook, YouTube or Twitter for the latest events, people, and organizations who make a difference in Santa Cruz County.

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# People who “echo” Cynthia Matus Morriss

This month we are happy to feature a woman who is making a difference in the field of education Cynthia Matus Morris. She started serving as a governing board member for the Patagonia Elementary School District #6 from 1988 through 2020. She was appointed to serve on the governing board of the Patagonia Union High School in 2020 to date. Besides being inspired by her mother, Cynthia’s husband Ron has always encouraged her to do what makes her happy, which is being of service to family, friends, and the community, no matter the time it takes.

She volunteered at the Patagonia schools by reading to elementary students, and attended school field trips. Cynthia has for 25 years helped bring arts education programs to schools in Santa Cruz County through Santa Cruz County Young Audiences.

Through the support of her colleagues in Santa Cruz County, she served on the Arizona School Boards Association’s Board of Directors (ASBA) for seven years. In 1995, she was awarded the “All Arizona School Board Member Award.” Matus was elected and served in all the executive offices of the ASBA. She served as the first Latina President of ASBA in 2003. She was then elected to serve as President of the National School Boards Association’s (NSBA) Pacific Region in 2005.

In 2008-2010, Cynthia was elected as Chair of NSBA’s National Hispanic Caucus of School Board Members and a year later elected to serve on the NSBA Board of Directors, from 2011 to 2014.

Cynthia Matus Morris was honored with the ASBA Barbara B. Robey Lifetime Achievement Award for outstanding contributions and dedication in support of public education and ASBA’s mission through servant leadership in 2014. She was later named in 2019, AZ19 Most Influential People. As an elected Latina official was invited to serve on the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials Board of Directors, NALEO.

“It is important for me to act as an advocate for the schools and the students. Listen to ideas and opinions from the students, staff, and citizens and strive to incorporate their views into the deliberations and decisions. The connections and relationships with the school community, students, and parents all play a key role when it comes to setting policy (that is not mandated by statute), hiring the best Superintendent for the district, and setting the budget,” said Matus Morriss.

As a board member, I am mindful of the decisions being made at the board table and the impact it has on staff, students, and families. Many tasks and decisions are delegated to the superintendent but ultimately the board is responsible for all district matters. We witnessed the impact COVID-19 had in our schools. It changed our traditional methods of teaching. As a result, school governance needs to change to meet safety requirements while helping our students achieve their potential.

The school board is currently working on community outreach. This is one of our major focuses, especially now, after the pandemic. We want to welcome people back to getting involved with the school and their children. After a year of having to close the campus down, we want to focus on reaching out to welcome the community back on campus as long as it is safe. Many of our other plans needed to be re-prioritized due to the pandemic. In order to see progress in our community we need certain things to change in our area. We need more affordable housing. We have great teachers, but too many of them have to travel to work in Patagonia. Affordable housing would benefit our community. At a state level, we need a government that is willing to support public education for rural areas. Promoting school choice sure is a great campaign slogan, but in reality, it is hurting public schools.

Patagonia Public Schools are working towards increasing student achievement. Our goal is to have students embrace a growth mindset and understanding that with proper hard work they can achieve anything. We are in the process of increasing our CTE and Dual Enrollment programs at the school. We continue to prepare students for life after school no matter what path they choose. We also want students to know that attending a college is always an option and we are working towards increasing the rate at which students fill out FAFSA to 100%. We reached 83% this school year and won the most improved FAFSA completion rate for the Arizona FAFSA challenge.

Cynthia’s parents were born in Santa Cruz County. Her father, Guillermo, was born in Harshaw, and mother Carmen in Duquesne. Both her parents attended Patagonia Schools. Her sister, Emma, and her were both born in Nogales, AZ. She has lived in the Patagonia area for 68 years. Matus attended school in Harshaw, Patagonia Elementary School and Patagonia Union High School. She is married to Ronald R. Morriss. They have two daughters, Samantha and Rhonda, and her late sons, Charles and John Wm. They have four grandchildren, Emily, Johnny, Alexis, and Thomas with a great-grandchild due in late July!

Ron and Cynthia are former owners of Patagonia Cable TV, Big Foot Feed & Supply, and the Alamo Country Store. She has been a full-time volunteer for most of her life serving with the Patagonia Friends of the Library, 4-H, Patagonia Youth Enrichment Center, and other non-profit organizations. She is a member of the Patagonia United Methodist Church.

**“Patagonia is special to me because of our many family ties and friendships. The beauty of the mountains, high desert and closeness to the Mexican border continues to be pleasing to my soul,”** said Cynthia Matus Morriss.



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MAKING GRADUATION MEMORIES  
**Patagonia High School**  
 CLASS of 2021

Patagonia Union High School hosted their formal graduation commencement on Friday, June 4th at 7:30pm at their sports field. From every angle of the field, friends, school faculty, and family members could see the stage where the soon to be graduates were seated. The chairs were decorated in black, and orange highlighting the school colors. The PUHS Steel Band opened the procession playing the “Pomp & Circumstance,” as students walked towards the stage. The assistant principal Micheal Young welcomed students, staff, and their families followed by the pledge of allegiance directed by senior class president Hannah Rose Young. The opening remarks were made by the Superintendent Kenny Hayes along with the presentation of honors. It was a joyful ceremony for the graduates, staff, and family members as they all shared a sense of excitement. A total of 23 seniors received their diplomas from the superintendent along with words of encouragement. Memories of the years flowed with tears and cheers for the graduates, as their families and school staff celebrated the Class of 2021.

## Rio Rico Clean-Up

Approximately 30 residents from around Santa Cruz County recently participated in an organized trash clean up Saturday, June 5th. The event was organized by SCC Supervisor Bruce Bracker, District 3 for trash collection along Ruby Road in Rio Rico.

Connie Williams arrived for duty representing the Friends of the Santa Cruz River. “I think this is an awesome idea. The people that I have talked to are just desperate to get out and do something. I think there is a lot of community spirit in Rio Rico and in this county in general, they just need an opportunity.”

Tony Vartola, representing Rio Rico Rotary was also pleased with the turnout as well, “this is about five times more than I expected to show up.” Having organized similar events in the past, he explained that outside of his Rotary club, he had little participation.

Bracker said he was very pleased with the turnout. “I think it’s great, especially considering the sheriff’s office had another twelve people helping them along with the sheriff’s family to clean up Pendleton. This is a really great start of what could be regular Rio Rico cleanings.”

- Participating in the clean-up:**
- Bank of Yuma**
  - Friends of the Santa Cruz River**
  - JROTC, Rio Rico High School**
  - Rio Rico Fire Department**
  - Rio Rico Rotary**
  - National Honor Society, Nogales High School**
  - Nogales Rotary**
  - SCC Emergency Management**
  - SCC Public Works**
  - SCC Sheriff’s Office**
  - Knights of Columbus, Tubac**



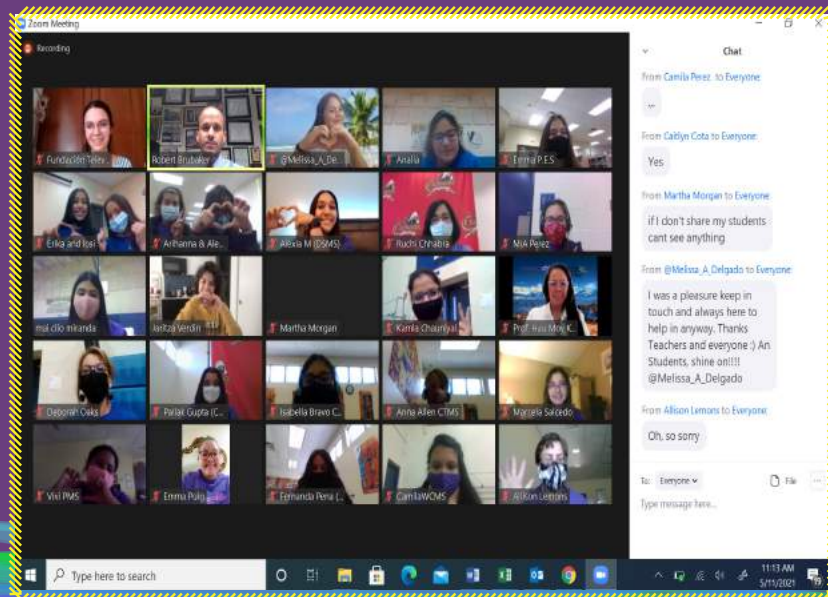
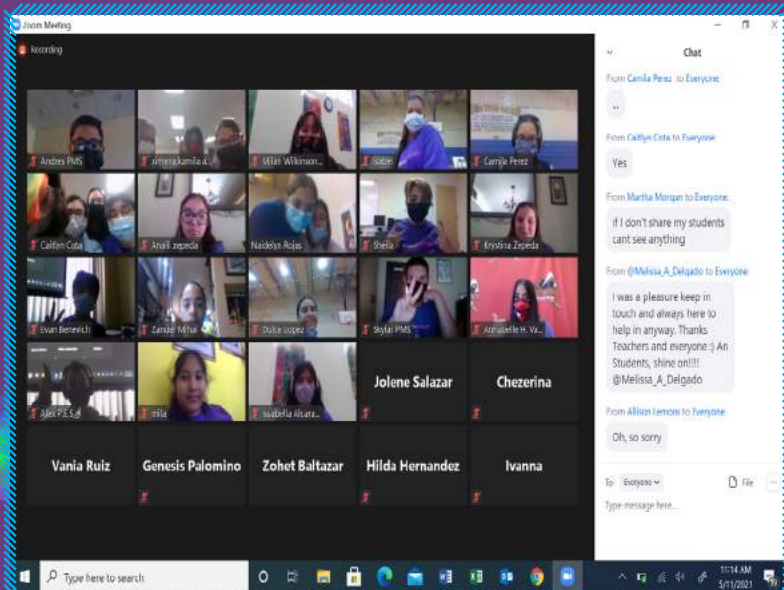
# TECHNOLOchicas Conference

On May 11th, Santa Cruz County Schools Superintendent Alfredo I. Velasquez office hosted the 3rd Santa Cruz County South32 TECHNOLOchicas Conference. TECHNOLOchicas is an afterschool club that encourages young Latinas to pursue careers in STEM-related fields (STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics).

Over 80 students from across Santa Cruz County participated in this year's conference, which was held online due to the pandemic. A panel of three prominent Latinas in STEM- Professor Hau Moy Kwon, Salt Lake Community College; Melissa Delgado, a cybersecurity expert at Morgan Stanley; and Jaritza Verdin, a cloud support engineer with iManage- talked to students about how they started their careers, and offered them advice on breaking into STEM-related spaces. Students also participated in a series of workshops designed to hone their math and programming skills. Notable guests included Arizona State Senator Rosana Gabaldon, Arizona State Representative Andrea Dalessandro, Arizona State Representative Daniel J. Hernandez, Jr., and South32 Hermosa Project President Patrick Risner, among others.

Most of all, the conference was a testament to the incredible work and dedication of this year's TECHNOLOchicas instructors: Mrs. Betsy Hughes, Calabazas School; Ms. Ruchi Chhabra and Mr. Ajay Parnache, Coatimundi Middle School; Ms. Martha Morgan, Desert Shadows Middle School; Ms. Elizabeth Lemons, Patagonia Elementary School; and Mrs. Deborah Oaks, Wade Carpenter Middle School. Their efforts made the program a success this year, in spite of very difficult circumstances.

In addition to the Santa Cruz County School Superintendent's Office, TECHNOLOchicas in Santa Cruz County is made possible by the generous support of the South32 Hermosa Project, and the Televisa Foundation.



# *New SCV35 District Community Liaison John Fanning*

*The Santa Cruz Valley Unified School District No. 35 (SCV35) is pleased to announce Mr. John Fanning has been selected as the new District Community Outreach/Co-Curricular Coordinator.*

*The position was created to serve as a community liaison for the district and support community use of new facilities being constructed as part of the \$22.5 million bond program approved in 2019. “This position will allow us to expand and strengthen our relationships with the SCV35 community. It is our goal to make SCV35 the center of our community by providing a first class education, but also providing amenities that build our community,” explained Superintendent David Verdugo.*

*Fanning began working for SCV35 as a physical education teacher nearly 33 years ago. Over the years, he has served as a teacher (14 years), coach (25+ years), athletic director (2 years), assistant principal (4 years), principal (13 years), and now District Community Outreach / Co-Curricular Coordinator.*

*Fanning’s dedication to the youth in our community extends beyond his positions within the school district. He has coached football, basketball, baseball, track & field, volleyball, golf, wrestling, swim team, and AYSO soccer for community youth leagues.*

*He also takes an active role in other community organizations outside of youth sports and activities. Fanning is currently involved in the Rio Rico Rotary, United Way, Santa Cruz County Provisional Community College District Board.*

*Having lived and served the community for so many years, Mr. Fanning says he has certainly developed a vision for the community. “My vision for this new position is to be the liaison between our district and the entire community, and make SCV35 the “HUB” of our community. I have lived here for over 17 years, and have been a parent, coach, teacher, and administrator for over 32 years. Throughout this time, I have seen the community grow, although there has never really been a “hub” in our community..... a place where people, young and old alike, can go to take part in healthy activities. My job is to welcome the community to our facilities and ensure that our district continues to be active in the community. By working together, schools, families, and our community can promote shared learning goals and collaboration and can prepare for a more promising future.”*

*In 2019, Mr. Fanning became the athletic director and associate principal for Rio Rico High School. He transitioned to the new outreach position at the beginning of June 2021, after SCV35 welcomed Chris Laughland as the new Rio Rico High School Assistant Principal-Athletics. **“Throughout the current transition process, Chris Laughland, and I have been able to meet extensively to ensure that the transition is seamless. With his incredible positive energy, and ability to think outside of the box, our students are truly lucky to have the wonderful athletic experiences that I know they will enjoy. I am sure Chris Laughland will most certainly take the athletic program and the RRHS athletes to new heights.”***



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# **Holy Cross Hospital CEO announces retirement**

## **Rojas-Sanchez promoted to Chief Administrative Officer**

**NOGALES (June 22, 2021) – Debra Knapheide, who has led Carondelet Holy Cross Hospital since 2010, has announced she will retire effective July 2, 2021. Knapheide has served in multiple roles including Chief Executive Officer/Chief Nursing Officer/Chief Operating Officer.**

**Dina Rojas-Sanchez, the hospital's administrative director, is being promoted to Chief Administrative Officer/Chief Operating Officer. Julie Jenkins, senior director of nursing, is being promoted to Chief Nursing Officer.**

**Rojas-Sanchez joined Holy Cross Hospital in 1994 and has served in many capacities including strategic planning and operations. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Communications from the University of Arizona and a Master's degree in Multicultural Education from Northern Arizona University.**

**Jenkins has been with Carondelet since 2010, and at Holy Cross since 2016. She is experienced in nursing leadership and education, performance improvement and clinical informatics. She earned a Master of Science in Nursing degree from the University of Phoenix.**

**“Dina and Julie have been with Holy Cross for several years and, along with the rest of our team, have contributed to the hospital's success. Both are local residents and committed to serving the greater Nogales and southern Arizona community,” said Knapheide.**

**“I'm thankful for the opportunity to serve our community and appreciate the many relationships and partnerships we've enjoyed. Holy Cross is in good hands and will continue to provide excellent care for residents of Nogales and the surrounding areas,” she added.**

**Carondelet Holy Cross Hospital is a 25-bed critical access hospital designated by the National Rural Health Resource Center. As a rural safety net provider, the hospital offers access to health care for a broad population. It has also received recognition for patient safety from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, a division of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.**

**“Debbie has made many positive contributions during her time at Holy Cross, and while we will miss her, we wish her well in retirement. We are fortunate to have a succession plan in place that provides continuity to build on the successes Holy Cross has achieved over the years,” said Brian Elisco, Tenet Arizona Group CEO.**

**Under her leadership, the hospital has consistently been in the top 10 percent of Tenet hospitals for patient satisfaction. It led all other Tenet hospitals in the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality patient safety survey in 2019, which recognized teamwork within hospital departments, management support for a culture of patient safety, and continuous organizational learning opportunities.**

**Knapheide was recognized by Becker's Healthcare in 2018 and 2019 as one of the 70 Critical Access Hospital CEOs to know for innovation, quality and patient safety on the local and national level. In 2018 she was one of the 143 women leaders of hospitals nationwide recognized for management and leadership skills, as well as career accomplishments.**

**“Through Debbie's leadership, Holy Cross has been a strong performer and recognized for its high quality care and patient satisfaction. I am confident that the hospital will continue as a high performer with Dina and Julie at the helm,” he noted.**



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**HAPPY 4TH OF JULY!**

**Mayor Arturo Garino & Nogales City Council**

**INDEPENDENCE  
DAY!**



*4th of July*

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**County Recorder**

**Eduviges Covarrubias-Recorder/Voter Clerk**

**Monica Martinez-Recorder/Voter Clerk**

**Stephanie Ballesteros-Recorder Voter/Clerk**

**Rosa Anna Fajardo-Recorder Clerk**

**Jenny Sandoval-Recorder/Voter Clerk**

**2150 N. Congress Drive, Suite 101**

**Nogales, Arizona 85621**

**Phone: (520) 375-7990**

# Let's Talk Health

Summer is here and most of us want to spend it outside. We want to barbecue, go on hikes, spend time in a pool and we especially want to go to the beach. These are all fun activities that we can do with our family and friends. Taking some simple safety precautions, however, can reduce our skin cancer risk.

Skin cancer is caused by too much exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light. UV rays are invisible, and they come from the sun, tanning beds, and sunlamps. They burn the skin and can damage skin cells.

This summer remember to stay safe by:

- Staying in the shade (under an umbrella or tree) as much as possible especially during 9:00am to 3:00pm (standard time).
- Using sunscreen or protective clothing. Both mineral and chemical sunscreens with an SPF of 15 or higher.
- Wearing long sleeved shirts and pants when possible as these provide protection from the harmful UV Rays. If you are at the beach, try wearing a t-shirt or beach cover up for extra protection.
- Wearing a hat that covers your face, ears, and the back of your neck. Darker hats may offer more protection against UV Rays.
- Protecting your eyes and the skin around them from UV rays with sunglasses. Wearing sunglasses also reduces the risk of cataracts. For maximum protection look for sunglasses that block both UVA and UVB rays. Most sunglasses sold in the US do meet this standard.

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### OPENINGS:

Booking Clerk  
Communications Officer  
Detention Officer

# Mayor's Corner

Hello my friends,

I am happy to report that many paving projects have been completed and are close to completion thanks to the wonderful job done by the City of Nogales Public Works Street Department. So far this year, the following streets have been either paved or repaired: Mariposa Ranch Road, Via Coronado, Calle Sonora, Baffert Drive, Mi Casa Drive, Bitache Drive, Target Range, and Western Avenue. Streets that are currently being paved or repaired are: Valle Verde Drive, Larrimore Street, and Vista del Cielo. Many more projects are slated to begin soon, including brand new sidewalks along Grand Avenue. We're continuously working on making Nogales a better place to live.

On another note, I am very pleased with the number of people in our community that have received their COVID vaccine. Over 70% of the population has been fully vaccinated, we're the highest fully vaccinated county in the entire state. This would not have been possible without the combined efforts of all the organizations involved. Thank you for doing your part to keep our community safe.

In June I, along with other Nogales and Santa Cruz County stakeholders, held a roundtable discussion with Governor Doug Ducey. The economy, the pandemic, and border travel restrictions were some of the topics we discussed. It's always a pleasure to sit down with local business leaders and the Governor to talk about continuing to work progressively together to resolve issues affecting our community.



# Sheriff's Round-Up



The local weather groundhog (actually a Santa Cruz River bullfrog) is telling the Sheriff that it is going to be a great rainy season. Per local cowboy folklore, a hot June means that San Juan's Day, June 24, will be the season; and we had a VERY HOT June! Vaquero optimism says June 24 for the start date, but our bullfrog says the Fourth of July will be when the season starts with a bang. The Sheriff and his wife were privileged to have a tour of the Kino Border Initiative in Nogales, Sonora this month along with other Members of the Law Enforcement Immigration Task Force and faith leaders from various churches around the U.S. It was a delightful opportunity to see and participate in a tangible display of neighbors helping neighbors. What an important work is done by local places in Nogales, Sonora like the Kino Border Initiative and the Albergue San Juan Bosco Migrant Shelter, and organizations in Arizona like the Crossroads Mission in Nogales, Arizona and Casa Alitas in Tucson. It is really worth a tour and some hands-on volunteer work if you haven't pitched in yet at one of these local private faith-based organizations. The Sheriff's Office welcomed Jose Mendoza to its ranks as another graduate this month from the Correctional Officer Training Academy in Tucson. Great job Officer Mendoza! The Sheriff's Office is bidding a fond farewell to Ray Sayre this month, the local director of the county Emergency Management Agency and a longtime partner of all first responders. He facilitated the very successful multi-agency LEPC "Local Emergency Planning Committee" and hosted many innovative training sessions. All the best to Ray in his future endeavors!

The Sheriff's Office also proudly participated in the annual Santa Cruz County Memorial Day celebration this past month. On a somber note, the Sheriff's Office along with many other agencies, friends, and family celebrated the life of Nogales Police Officer Jeremy Britton who passed away unexpectedly while performing selfless public service for the community.

The Sheriff's Office and many other community partners were glad to be able to hit the local streets on our personal time and pick up trash throughout the community this month. It was great to see so many of you out there as well. The Sheriff's Office particularly focused its attention on cleaning roadways adopted by the organization.

This month, the Sheriff was privileged to be able to speak to Governor Ducey about local issues along with other community leaders during a round-table meeting in Nogales. The Sheriff's Office was also happy to be able to set up an information booth and interact with the community at a Family Night Out at the Pierson School where the Sheriff, the Mayor, and the County Attorney addressed the youth in the community in person and via live-stream about the need to make good choices in life. Get ready for the thunder and lightning. It's coming! -Sheriff David Hathaway



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**A message from the Santa Cruz County Attorney**

**Don't risk it! Don't Drink & Drive!**

***Happy 4th of July!***

**INDEPENDENCE  
DAY!**



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**The life of the nation is secure only while the nation is honest, truthful and virtuous.-Frederick Douglass**