

Local News

PAGE 1 | SECTION B | TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2026 | MONTEREYHERALD.COM

SALINAS RODEO

LAMBERT TO HEADLINE KICK OFF

By Chris Hamilton
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SALINAS — The California Salinas Rodeo announced that country music star Miranda Lambert will be headlining the 2026 Big Week Kick Off Concert on July 11.

The Big Week Concert launches a week of events at the 116th annual California Rodeo Salinas, July 16-19.

Lambert is the most awarded artist in Academy of Country Music history with three GRAMMYS, 14 Country Music Association Awards, seven

Number 1 solo albums and 10 Number 1 radio singles.

“One of the most celebrated artists in modern country music, Lambert brings her signature grit, storytelling, and chart-topping hits to the Central Coast for a high-energy night that launches the rodeo festivities in unforgettable style,” said the California Rodeo Salinas in a statement.

Opening for Lambert is Dylan Scott, a “rising country star,” along with additional openers yet to be announced, according to the California Rodeo Salinas.

The concert is presented by Taylor Farms and produced by

the California Rodeo Salinas and David Drew Productions. In years passed, the Big Week Kickoff has featured artists like Blake Shelton, Kid Rock, Aerosmith, Brad Paisley and Tim McGraw.

The rodeo will be held at the Salinas Sports Complex. Tickets go on sale Thursday at 10 a.m. ranging from \$60 to \$100.

To find out more and to purchase tickets, visit <https://www.carodeo.com/>

Chris Hamilton is a California Local News fellow covering Salinas and the Salinas Valley for The Herald.



The California Salinas Rodeo returns July 16. ARIANNA NALBACH-MONTEREY HERALD

CARMEL VALLEY

Roundabout project enters phase 4

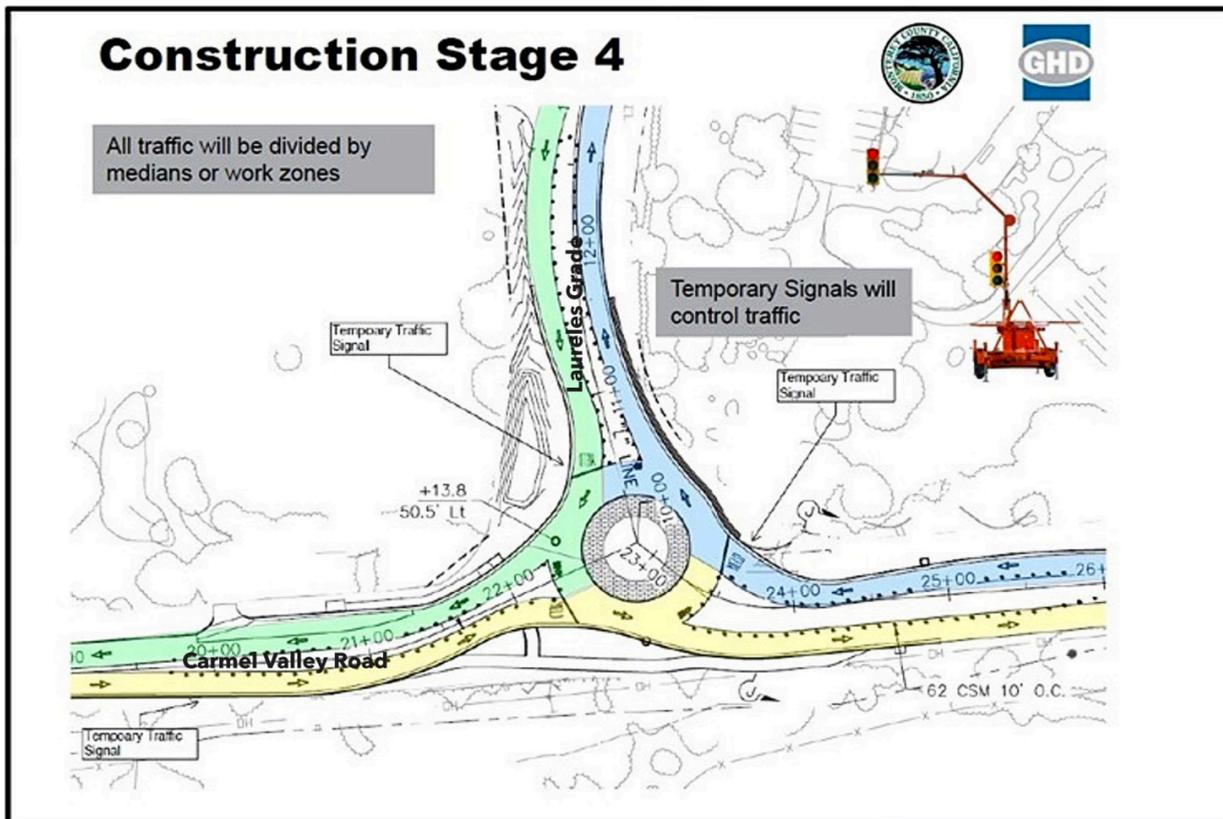


Figure 1. Construction Stage 4 Traffic Handling

Construction of the Carmel Valley Road and Laureles Grade Roundabout project began late last June and is expected to be completed by this spring. JAMES HERRERA/MONTEREY HERALD - COUNTY OF MONTEREY PUBLIC WORKS, FACILITIES AND PARKS

By James Herrera
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CARMEL VALLEY — The Carmel Valley Road and Laureles Grade Roundabout project moves into the fourth of five stages this week and motorists can expect up to 60-minute delays due to construction activities.

The Carmel Valley Road and Laureles Grade Roundabout project involves replacing the existing one-way, stop-controlled “T” intersection at Carmel Valley Road and Laureles Grade with a roundabout.

The County of Monterey will be constructing stage four of the roundabout project this week on Wednesday and Thursday,

though unanticipated rainfall may prompt delays. Work is set to occur from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Up to 60-minute traffic delays are expected during the early commute hours and motorists are encouraged to plan accordingly. Emergency responders will be afforded priority through the work zone when needed. During this time, flaggers will be used

to direct traffic. Once complete, temporary traffic signals will direct traffic. County of Monterey Public Works, Facilities and Parks says it will make every effort to minimize the traffic disturbance and expeditiously move to the next phase of construction.

The project, located at the

See PROJECT on Page B2

PACIFIC GROVE

Voters look for more authority in council pay

By Kyarra Harris
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PACIFIC GROVE — A petition to create a voter initiative amending the Pacific Grove City Charter is circulating, led by former councilman Luke Coletti and the advocacy group Transparent Pacific Grove.

According to a press release, Transparent Pacific Grove filed a notice of intent on Feb. 3 to circulate a petition to qualify a charter amendment for the Nov. 3 ballot. The proposed initiative would require voter approval before the mayor or city councilmembers could approve changes to their own compensation or receive city-paid benefits. The requirements would be written directly into the City Charter.

The petition stems from the attempt to raise the council's stipend, which would have been the first pay increase in more than 20 years. Last year in May, the Pacific Grove City Council approved an ordinance increasing monthly stipends for councilmembers from \$420 to \$966 and for the mayor from \$700 to \$1,610. The ordinance took effect immediately and was approved.

In July, Coletti submitted a referendum petition challenging the ordinance. The Monterey County Registrar of Voters certified the petition with 1,178 valid signatures, exceeding the 10% threshold of registered voters required to qualify. Under state law, the filing of the petition automatically suspended the ordinance.

The council repealed the ordinance and has not brought the matter up again since.

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The newly proposed initiative would amend the city charter to require voter approval for any future changes to mayor or council member compensation or benefits.

According to the press release, the measure would also require public disclosure of fiscal impacts before any such proposal appears on the ballot and limit these decisions to regular general municipal elections.

Coletti previously argued the council should have placed the pay increase before voters, citing the city's financial outlook. In earlier council meetings, staff reports showed a \$55 million unfunded pension liability, rising insurance costs and projected budget deficits.

Under state law, cities with populations under 35,000 may increase council pay by up to 5% annually since the last adjustment. Pacific Grove used its charter authority to exceed that limitation and make the higher increase effective immediately in 2025.

If enough valid signatures are collected, the initiative would be placed on the Nov. 3 ballot.

SUCCESSFUL AGING

Judgments around age fade but persist



Helen Dennis
COLUMNIST

This “best-of” Helen Dennis column was first published in 2017.

Q: I am a 65-year-old man in good shape and run my own company. I recently had a cardiac procedure, which fortunately was successful, and then spent the night in the hospital. The next morning I was dressed (jeans and plaid shirt), sitting in a chair ready to leave when a woman walked in and said, “You don’t look sick!” She then asked if I had any appliances. I had no idea what she was talking about and wanted to say I had a toaster and mixer at home. She finally told me that I didn’t look

65 and left in search of her next patient. What did she expect me to look like? Did she think I was retired because of my age? Why do we still have this “thing” about age 65?

— B.J.

A: In all likelihood, the woman was a social worker who was a discharge planner. These professionals play a vital part in case management. They help patients develop a care plan before leaving the hospital that will keep them as healthy as possible, safe and free of a relapse. The appliances she mentioned were likely references to a cane or walker.

Let’s initially give the social worker some slack. She might have just seen someone your age with the same condition who had mobility problems and needed a walker or cane. Consequently, she may have been shocked to see you with the same condition looking and feeling fit.

However, she also may have a stereotyped impression of what 65 looks like. And that number is still a marker.

For many, it has been the age to receive full Social Security benefits; for those born in 1960 or later, that age moves to 67 years. Sixty-five is also the age to collect Medicare. Age 65 also conveys the message of retirement. This context came about in the late 1800s when Otto von Bismarck, chancellor of Prussia, selected 65 as the age when a person could collect a full pension to retire. The average life expectancy at that time was 45, so most people did not live long enough to collect.

In 1935, the U.S. government adopted Bismarck’s retirement age of 65 to qualify for full Social Security benefits.

Life expectancy was almost 62 years. If you lived until 65, you were considered old. Note the official term for Social Security is “Old Age, Survivors and Disabil-

ity Insurance,” or OASDI.

Is it any wonder we connect Social Security with old age?

Today we think of 65 as the number of years lived, governed by how we feel, what we think and what we do. I asked several people what it meant to turn 65. Their responses varied.

“I felt that 50 was tougher, realizing that I had more years behind me than left to live.”

“Sixty-five was liberating. I don’t have to be polite.”

“Becoming 65 made me feel that it was legitimate to retire.”

“Sixty-five was a time of reckoning. Was I living the life I wanted?”

“I felt I was getting older when my back went out. I exercise now and take more time to take care of myself. I feel better at 70 than I did at 60.”

“Just another birthday. I feel healthy, dedicated to eating well and exercising so I can make it

See AGE on Page B2