



COUNTY OF MENDOCINO

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND BUILDING SERVICES

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SEPTEMBER 2025 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT

Introduction Highlights

The Department of Planning and Building Services (“Department”) honors Code Enforcement Officer Fernand Gandolfo, who passed away unexpectedly in early September, recognizing his dedication, mentorship, and positive impact on colleagues and the community. The Department continues to track performance through monthly metrics, is managing staffing changes, and is working toward securing and implementing new permitting software to improve service efficiency. The Code Enforcement Division remains focused on life and safety priorities amidst rising complaint volumes, while Planning staff continue policy updates and community engagement efforts to support economic growth and resilience.

In memoriam

The Department and the Code Enforcement Division wish to share a tribute to one of its most valued Code Enforcement Officers who unexpectedly passed away in early September.

Code Enforcement Officer Fernand Gandolfo joined the Department on December 27, 2020, bringing with him experience from his time as a Code Enforcement Officer in Lake County. His transition into the Division was easy and he quickly served as a mentor to new officers and his peers. Officer Gandolfo was a dedicated officer both to his department and the Mendocino County community. Despite living in Lake County, he drove to his Ukiah office for over an hour commute each way. He was always ready to go to work with a “can-do” attitude and willing to take on new challenges. Officer Gandolfo earned the “Customer Service Hero” award in June 2022 for his undeniable people skills and supportive efforts to help property owners achieve compliance – the goal of the Division. Officer Gandolfo also obtained his Certified Code Enforcement Officer (CCEO) certificate on July 14, 2023. His most notable work habits included his strong organizational skills, thoroughness, and perseverance to overcome challenging cases within his workload.

Officer Gandolfo is remembered for his kind and caring approach to teaching the “ins and outs” of Code Enforcement as a much-appreciated introduction for new staff members. He naturally was approachable and was always willing to help others when needed. He blossomed many of his work relationships into friendships outside of work. Officer Gandolfo was someone that could always be counted on to have an answer and give encouraging words of wisdom, no matter what the situation.

Outside of work, Officer Gandolfo will be remembered for his love to work on vehicles, traveling with his lovely wife Tera and his dogs throughout the US, sharing his homemade smoked cheeses, and his overall love for animals, as was shown on his final workday when he found an injured owl at the back of the Ukiah office. He cared for the injured owl until it was picked up by California Department of Fish and Wildlife. He never gave up and always had a positive outlook on life. Fernand was an exceptional human who made a large positive impact on others and will be truly missed.

I. Effective County Government Organization

- The Department’s tool for measuring basic performance criteria, and thereby measuring success, is monthly metric reports, which are posted monthly to the Department’s webpage. These reports

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quantify revenue vs. expense, applications received, workload inventory, and lead time for completion. The metrics are separated by division. Please go to <https://www.mendocinocounty.gov/departments/planning-building-services/metrics-and-permits> for the latest metrics.

- An update on the Department Software conversion - The Department anticipates bringing forward a contract to secure the Software provider, type and licenses. Once secured, the Department will seek to secure an implementation contractor. With this new software, the Department will be able to implement improvements that will make the permitting process more efficient and user friendly to both the Department and the public.
- The Department is undergoing new staffing changes, including the departure of three staff members who enrolled in the County offered VSIP. The Assistant Director position will become vacant in early October 2025. A vacancy has opened to replace a Building Inspector position and is currently in the recruitment process. The Department currently is in the process of recruiting for Building Inspector, Permit Technician, and Department Analyst.

II. A Safe and Healthy County

- The Code Enforcement Division (CED) continues to work on open cases while responding to new complaints in accordance with the enforcement priorities established by the BOS. A total of 124 new complaints were received in July, while August saw 84 new complaints received (the monthly average in calendar year 2024 and the first six (6) months of the current calendar year is 44.25). While this recent influx of complaints may result in some increase in response times and delays in addressing all active cases, the Division remains committed to investigating complaints according to the BOS-defined list of priorities, with a focus on those that potentially affect life and safety.
- The Board of Supervisors (BOS) Ad Hoc committee responded via the September 9, 2025 meeting to the Mendocino County Grand Jury published a report on June 6, 2025 titled "Planning and Building Department Structural Issues: Exposing the cracks" which can be found here: <https://www.mendocinocounty.gov/government/county-organization/grand-jury/2024-25-reports>.
- Low intensity Camping for Inland Areas was discussed at the September 9, 2025, BOS meeting. Planning staff presented options to the BOS for consideration and was provided additional direction toward the draft ordinance to bring back for future consideration.
- The Department is continuing to work with the State on revisions for the Surface Mining and Reclamation Ordinance update.

III. A Thriving Economy

- PBS Planning staff is working on a request for proposal for consultants to assist with updates to the County's Open Space policies, captured in the Resource Management Element, as required by Senate Bill 1452, and to potentially assist with creation of an Environmental Justice Element as required by Senate Bill 1000. County staff have already begun working on these updates but desire assistance from a consultant who specializes in such work to ensure the Department is compliant.
- Community stakeholder meetings for both Short Term Rentals and Low Intensity Camping are completed, and PBS Planning staff will be presenting results to the Board, requesting guidance on Staff recommendations.

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IV. A Prepared and Resilient County

- Department staff continue to participate in all Emergency Operations Center (“EOC”) related trainings and respond to requests for information as it relates to emergency preparedness. Additionally, PBS continues to track recovery numbers from previous disasters including the Redwood Valley Complex, Oak and August Complex, Broiler Fire and Hopkins Fire.

Other/Additional Information

- Planning and Building Services Online Customer Survey is Live! Click the link below to complete our confidential Customer Survey.
<https://forms.office.com/g/UjZnVN4eHe>
- Our Fort Bragg office has relocated! As of Monday, June 16, 2025, the Fort Bragg offices of Planning and Building Services (PBS) are now located at 752 South Franklin Street, Fort Bragg.