

McGuire promises to look out for Del Norte County

April 11, 2021



State Sen. Mike McGuire promised local officials he would keep Del Norte County and the North Coast on the top of his mind while working in the California Legislature this year.

McGuire, while speaking with the Crescent City and Del Norte County Chamber of Commerce, said he has already worked to help the North Coast, but more good news will be coming.

He discussed the issue on the top of everyone's minds, COVID 19 and the vaccine. He said good news is coming quickly to California.

"One-size-fits-all doesn't work for the North Coast and it doesn't fit Del Norte County," McGuire said. "Long-term, the outlook for vaccine looks incredibly promising. The federal government asked the state to get prepped for 4 million vaccines a week. We've been receiving about 1.8 million vaccines a week."

To prepare, the state has asked every county for a plan to distribute the vaccine. McGuire said Del Norte County has turned in its plan and it is being reviewed. He said in just a matter of weeks, the vaccine increase will begin.

“The short-term doesn’t look as robust,” McGuire said. “We’ve been averaging about 1.8 million vaccines, but I promise you it will get better. We anticipate 4 million vaccines coming to California. That doesn’t include pharmacies like Walmart. They get them directly from the federal government.”

McGuire said the state will also increase funding to reach hard-to-reach communities.

With the vaccine providing a promising future, McGuire said it is time to think about economic recovery. He said the state has already taken some key steps to help.

“If you’re a landlord and you are owed back rent, you need to apply for the tenant relief dollars,” McGuire said.

He said the state is willing to pay 80 percent of back rent to make tenants complete.

“The economic recovery plan being launched by this state is focused on small businesses,” McGuire said.

He said 13 out of every 14 businesses in Del Norte County have received some grant funding during the pandemic. More funding will be available soon, he said.

McGuire also said the North Coast is primed to benefit over the summer as people travel closer to home.

“People are going to be reluctant to get on planes for at least the next year,” he said. “People are going to go on road trips. This will greatly benefit the North Coast.”

McGuire also said the state is determined to fix Last Chance Grade, both in the short-term and long-term.

“Folks have a right to feel incredibly angry, frustrated, deeply concerned,” McGuire said. “Frankly, folks have a right to be pissed.”

He said the state is viewing Last Chance Grade in two ways. No. 1, they must get the road open for two-lane traffic as soon as possible. No. 2, they must find a permanent solution to make Highway 101 work for generations to come.

He said one option being considered for the long-term solution is the current route, but McGuire said he doesn’t like it and will fight for an inland route.

“We’re working as quickly as possible to get this fixed under the slide,” McGuire said. “We’re working to get the project done by middle to late summer, so we can get both lanes open.”

Jaime Matteoli with CalTrans said a lot of work is being done on Last Chance Grade.

“Our mission is to build a safe, reliable, long-term solution,” he said. “I’m confident we will be successful. The most important right now is this process of creating alternatives. We have seven right now. We want to

narrow that down.”

Matteoli said environmental studies are under way, which he hopes will be finished this year. An environmental assessment is planned next year, which will move the process forward.

“I assure you, no resource will be spared,” McGuire said. “\$13 million has been received, and if we need more, we will get that.”

State of the County

Supervisor Valerie Starkey shared what she called the state of the county address during the same meeting. Starkey said progress is being made, even during the pandemic.

“Currently, our vaccines are a huge focus is Del Norte County,” Starkey said. “We’re fortunate to have a huge group of volunteers.”

She said more than 9,000 doses of the vaccine have been given by the county with more by pharmacies and doctors in the area.

“It is our hope to get the majority of our county vaccinated by June of this year,” she said.

She said the county will have less revenue to work with in 2021, but said the number could have been much worse. She said Measure R, which voters approved last year, will bring in revenue starting in May. That will provide funding for vital services such as roads, law enforcement and responding to natural disasters.

Overall, she said the county is ready for COVID to go away.

“We are moving forward with the 4th of July activities,” she said. “We expect a full day of events followed by fireworks.”

State of the City

Mayor Pro Tem Blake Inscore gave an update on Crescent City, saying the focus is on a better tomorrow.

“In the midst of the pandemic, when the temptation is to focus on today, I’m so proud of our city staff and partners for focusing on the future,” Inscore said. “The future is bright in Crescent City and Del Norte County.”

Inscore said the city is hopeful it can get funding through Prop. 68 to rebuild Beachfront Park. He said that would be a huge benefit to the city and county.

“I think everyone here knows if we can get Beachfront Park built with the amphitheater, it’s going to be an economic driver for years to come,” he said.

Inscore said recent successes like improving part of Front Street are important but are just the beginning.

“We’re not going to wait around,” he said. “We’re going to keep pushing.”

He said the city recently hired a consultant with grant money and will use the consultant to answer a few key questions – who are we, where do we want to go and how do we get there?

“When you get that, the sky’s the limit for Crescent City and Del Norte County,” Inscore said.