



**MENDOCINO
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

To: Mendocino County News Media

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Grant Awarded for Round Valley Bike & Ped Study

Caltrans has awarded the Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG) a \$135,000 grant for a Round Valley Non-Motorized Needs Technical Study. MCOG has contributed \$15,000 of local funds to match the Environmental Justice grant. The project is expected to start in early 2012.

This technical study will build on a conceptual plan that was developed for the remote, rural community of Covelo and the Round Valley Indian Reservation. The Tribes, the County of Mendocino, MCOG, California Department of Transportation, and Covelo residents will evaluate the community's high priority non-motorized corridors from a technical standpoint, to identify potential bicycle and pedestrian improvement projects for future funding. There will be opportunities for public involvement.

"This is good news," commented John Pinches, Third District Supervisor and MCOG board member. "It's a great start on getting some of these projects done. Along with MTA's new eRide volunteer driver program, this means we can make progress on meeting people's transportation needs out here."

In 2007 and 2008, many community members participated in identifying needs and priorities to make walking and bicycling more safe and accessible in the Covelo area. "The north section of Highway 162 is the most dangerous and highly used walking area in our community," wrote James Russ, Executive Director of the Round Valley Indian Health Center, in a letter of support. The highway through town is notoriously lacking in roadside shoulders.

Tribal services, markets, local schools, ball fields and library are common destinations in the town's central area. "We have increased use of the library by three times with the expansion of the new facility," wrote Diann Simmons, an officer of Friends of the Round Valley Public Library. "Many of the patrons who use the library, and also come for events held in the Community Room, come on foot."

Environmental Justice and Community Based Transportation Planning grants are awarded annually by Caltrans. In District 1, MCOG and its neighboring counterpart, Lake County/City Area Planning Council, received three of the statewide grants this year. This will be MCOG's seventh grant from this program in as many years, having successfully completed four plans to date in Gualala, Laytonville, and Point Arena. Two are currently in progress, to plan a coastal trail near Westport and a trail along the railroad from Ukiah to Willits.

MCOG formed as a joint powers agreement in 1972, as mandated by state law, to disburse state and federal funds for transportation, to provide regional planning, and to serve as a regional forum. MCOG is overseen by a board consisting of two county supervisors, a countywide public appointee, and one council member from each of the four incorporated cities. For more information, call the MCOG office at 463-1859 or consult the agency's web site at www.mendocinocog.org.

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