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MARE ISLAND
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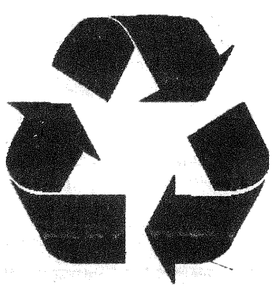
recently that rated Solano County as one of the hottest markets in the Nation based on homebuyers online search activity from different online search venues. It is not hard to understand why when you compare values in Solano to neighboring Central Contra Costa, where the median home value in June was $839,910.

Guy Benjamin (CAL BRE License #01014834, NMLS 887909) writes a weekly column for The Herald, offering general information on real estate matters. As it is impossible to address all possibilities and variations, he will try to answer individual questions by readers who contact him at ***707-246-0949*** *or* ***guyb@fairwaymc.com****.*



CITRUS

Continued from Page A1

The ongoing drought and water shortages are scarring the California citrus belt on the east side of the San Joaquin Valley, where blocks of citrus trees are abandoned or have been removed, and for-sale signs and well-drilling rigs are common. Farmers in citrus-growing regions that have no surface water and very little groundwater are scrambling to locate enough water just to keep trees alive.

Standing near a gurgling irrigation pump that in other years has used state-of-the-art technology to irrigate an 80-acre citrus grove, Stuller said, "This is a well that is about to give out; this is the last well (of four) that we have on this ranch."

Many east side citrus growers depend on water from the Friant-Kern Canal, a federal irrigation project with its primary source of water from the San Joaquin River, delivering water from Chowchilla to south of Bakersfield.

For a second consecutive season, the 20-plus irrigation districts that receive water from this project face a zero allocation of water.

In areas where farmers don't have access to groundwater, groves of trees, such as navel and Valencia oranges, are being removed so that water can be diverted to more valuable citrus varieties, such as mandarins and lemons.

Tulare County citrus grower Roger Everett, who received a zero water allocation from the Terra Bella Irrigation District, said that of his 75 acres of citrus, he has enough water to irrigate only 15 acres.

"We thought our district had secured water for another 20 acres, but that water seems to be tied up in the Shasta decision for the temperature releases for fish," Everett said. "We have another 20 acres of citrus that we decided it just wasn't worth the money to justify putting water on them. The 15 citrus acres that we are still irrigating are lemons, which are more valuable."

Everett, who is also a beekeeper, said with irrigation canals and ditches dry, this is the first year that he has had to place water near his bees.

"I know a lot of people are discussing the El Niño cycle that we are in, but I'm not going to get overly excited until I see it. Something has definitely got to change," Everett said. "A friend of mine has 160 acres that he is not even farming because he doesn't have enough well water."

A few miles away, Stuller stopped to check on progress at a ranch where an older block of Valencia trees was being removed.

"We can't justify the cost of the water needed to grow this crop because of the value, so we need to take that expensive ($2,000 an acre-foot) water and grow more valuable crops such as mandarins," Stuller said. "Growers are taking the citrus that only produces $100 a bin and pushing it out or letting it dry up, to move water to farm mandarins that produce $400 a bin."

Joel Nelsen, president of California Citrus Mutual in Exeter, said he estimates that between 20,000 and 25,000 acres of citrus trees will be removed this year, due to lack of water. That amount of acreage would generate roughly 650 jobs, he said.

"The September crop estimate is going to show a reduction because of the bulldozed acreage," Nelsen said. "It's just going to be a smaller industry as we transition through this."

He said he expects "some consolidation" among both farmers and packinghouses, which will reduce jobs.

PUBLIC MEETING
MARE ISLAND NAVAL SHIPYARD
RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD (RAB)
July 2015 MEETING

NAVFAC

The Department of Navy (DON) invites interested members of the public to attend updates and presentations with members of the Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) made up of representatives from the local community, Navy, Federal and State regulatory agencies. The DON encourages the public to keep informed about the environmental cleanup at Former Mare Island Naval Shipyard (MINS), Vallejo, California.

July 2015 Featured Topics

South Shore Area
Remedial Investigation Fieldwork Overview

Installation Restoration Program Site 15
Update and Path Forward

Date: Thursday, July 30, 2015
Time: 7:00 p.m. to 9:25 p.m.
Location: Mare Island Conference Center
375 G St., Vallejo, CA

Ask questions and voice your concerns. You Can Make a Difference!

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Janet Lear, (619) 532-0976 or Myrna Hayes, (707) 249-9633
Navy BRAC Web Page: http://www.bracpmo.navy.mil
Mare Island Environmental Web Page: http://www.mareisland.org