Lopez slaying task force begins work

1st meeting today of panel formed in wake of deputy’s shooting of 13-year-old
By PAUL PAYNE
THE PRESS DEMOCRAT

Members of a community task force created to suggest changes to law enforcement oversight including the establishment of a civilian review board for officer-involved shootings will be under strict time constraints when they attend their first meeting today.

The 21-member panel will be expected to produce quarterly results, starting with a recommendation for reviewing the use of deadly force, Sonoma County Supervisor Shirlee Zane said.

That initiative, which comes in the wake of last year’s fatal shooting of 13-year-old Andy Lopez by a sheriff’s deputy, will be delivered by early March to the Board of Supervisors, which could choose to adopt it after a series of public hearings.

The task force will then consider suggestions for community policing, to be submitted by April 30, before launching on a third recommendation to separate the administration of the coroner from the Sheriff’s Office, due 60 days later, Zane said.

By years’ end, the panel will be expected to forward a final suggestion of its own choosing that could be related to community healing, a weapons exchange program or building other law enforcement infrastructure, she said.

“This is a very strict timeline with very definitive goals,” said Zane, who supported the task force with the other supervisors. “This is not some feel-good task force. People are going to be expected to roll up their sleeves and work really hard.”

The task force, hand-picked by Zane and her four board colleagues, Santa Rosa Mayor Scott Bartley, Sheriff Steve Freitas and District Attorney Jill Ravitch, will meet at 6 p.m. at the county’s Human Services Department offices on Capricorn Way in southwest Santa Rosa.

Members are expected to pick a chairperson, break into subcommittees and take public comment. They will also set future meeting times, which are expected to occur at least once a week, Zane said.

The first order of business will be to study civilian review board models used in other jurisdictions. Calls for independent oversight have grown since Lopez was shot Oct. 22 by Sheriff’s Deputy Erick Gelhaus, who told police he mistook the BB gun Lopez was carrying for an AK-47 assault rifle.

The shooting is being investigated by the Santa Rosa Police Department under a county pros...
Cloverdale kiosk offers a view into others’ lives

That isn’t a new automated teller machine, there in the school office at Cloverdale High School.

It’s an interactive kiosk that tells stories, stories about the history of Sonoma County’s northernmost city and about the lives of people from all walks of life there.

Beyond being often fascinating, the interviews displayed by the machine seek to introduce neighbor to neighbor, counteract prejudice and suspicion, and develop a sense of “us-and-them” into one of “we.”

Officially termed a “Mobile Interactive Museum,” the human-connecting technology features a good many interviews aimed at dissolving the divide between Latinos and Anglos in the north county. But at the push of a button, people of all sorts tell their stories, share their successes and challenges and by implication invite others to step for a moment into their shoes.

“People tend to other-ize,” said Phyllis Rosenfield of Santa Rosa. She’s one of the county’s most diligent proponents of genuine acceptance of diversity and a key member of the partnership that created the kiosk. She’ll move it next month to the Cloverdale Citrus Fair.

“This is an opportunity to cross boundaries and make deeper connections,” she said.

The kiosk came to be through the shared vision of a nonprofit organization that Rosenfield founded, called Listening for a Change; the Cloverdale History Center; and Cloverdale High School. English and history students of teacher Wendy Conner conducted the oral-history interviews, some of which can also be seen on the website of Listening for a Change.

Trained by the agency, stu-

Students from Cloverdale High played a key role in the creation of a travelling kiosk, right, loaded with interviews of Cloverdale residents.
In Loving Memory of

Mary I. Wolfe
4/4/64 - 1/13/11

Mary, my Angel
I can't believe it's been three years since you passed. There hasn't been a day that I don't think about you and miss you. I love and miss you so much. I hurt. I know that

Hunt on for San Jose arsonist after 13 fires

ASSOCIATED PRESS
SAN JOSE — The hunt for an arsonist intensifies

fired this week.

Fire Department Capt. Rob Brown said Sunday 11

struck early Sunday. Authorities have re-

leased a sketch of the sus-