



August, September, October 2009

## SAVE RURAL ANGIN QUARTERLY UPDATE

The last Quarterly reported that Pacific Union College (PUC) had re-submitted their proposed subdivision project application and resumed work on its associated Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR). We continue to monitor the application and DEIR status.

SRA has retained both legal counsel and a professional environmental consultant to advise us in review of the DEIR. **As SRA supporters, it is of utmost importance that, when the DEIR hearings are scheduled, you participate in the process.** Not only that, we all need to be primed and ready to fight the proposed subdivision project when it finally comes before the County. Please remember that your continued financial support is vital to our collective efforts. We must succeed in stopping the PUC subdivision and protecting Angwin from becoming Napa County's sixth city!

## KEY BACKGROUND POINTS REGARDING THE DEIR IN GENERAL

- ▶ An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) describes and analyzes the significant environmental effects of a proposed project, identifies alternatives, and discusses ways to reduce or avoid possible environmental damage.
- ▶ EIRs are mandated under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), however, they are *advisory* documents designed to provide information but not dictate to policy-makers. The project sponsor (PUC) must hire a County-approved, independent environmental consulting firm to prepare, under the County's direction, the EIR for their project. EIRs are concerned *only with environmental impacts*, not the broader land use and community impacts.
- ▶ An "administrative draft EIR" is a working document prepared by the EIR consultant and circulated among County staff and some responsible agencies for their comment on accuracy and adequacy. It is not available for review by the public or the project sponsor (PUC), though the project description is provided so the project sponsor (PUC) may ensure that the project has been accurately depicted. The PUC "Project Description" is posted on the County website (see Planning, Current Projects, Angwin Project, "Chapter III"). For the PUC project, the County is requiring two administrative drafts, each with a 20-day review time. As of early November, the County had not received the first administrative draft.
- ▶ Once the public draft EIR (DEIR) is ready for circulation, the public typically has a 45-day review period. A public hearing on a DEIR is not required under CEQA; however, when the decision-making body is a commission or a board, the standard in Napa County has been to hold one or more public hearings during the review period to solicit additional public comments on the *adequacy* of the DEIR.
- ▶ The Final EIR consists of the text of the DEIR revised to reflect required text changes, all agency and public comments received on the DEIR, the County's responses to all comments, and a list of all persons and agencies that commented on the DEIR. Once the EIR has been certified complete, it is *one component* of the overall decision *to approve, approve with conditions, or deny* the project.
- ▶ Consideration of the proposed project for approval or denial occurs *as a separate decision* after completion of the Final EIR.
- ▶ The Board of Supervisors can issue a "Statement of Overriding Considerations" indicating that even though a project would result in unavoidable adverse impacts, specific economic, social or other stated benefits are sufficient to warrant project approval. On the other hand, a project may be denied in spite of an EIR that seems favorable to a proposed project; for example the proposed development is inconsistent with the County General Plan.