The county’s 2nd District Office has a new face this week. John Phillips was sworn into the office this past Tuesday, as the county said goodbye to retiring Supervisor Lou Calcagno.

One of Calcagno’s last tasks in office was taking a leading role in the Monterey County Board of Supervisors and Department Heads Retreat in December.

During a break in this working retreat, board members and department heads honored the long-time supervisor, thanking him for many years of work for the county, particularly his focus on the county’s financial stability.
The focus of this year’s annual retreat was finances: to create a shared understanding of the County’s financial picture and highlights of departments’ priority needs over the next few years as well as to strengthen teamwork.

The retreat, which was open to the public, began with an overview of county finances from its top financial officers: the Auditor-Controller, the Treasurer-Tax Collector and Assessor Clerk-Recorder. The three discussed how the county’s finances have changed over the last 15 years, from hard times and poor credit rating in 2000 to more stable current day, but pointed out the need for new revenue to meet the department’s priority needs.

Participants were seated in groups based on the county strategic initiatives and following the overview, supervisors and department heads worked throughout the day side-by-side, reviewing various department priorities. For the retreat, departments were asked to share their top three priority expenditures for the next three years - a list with a price tag of near half a billion dollars. Each group was asked to answer two questions:

- What overall observations do you have about the priority expenditure list?
- What are the key policy issues for consideration by the Board of Supervisors for each list?

The results were shared with the larger group, giving everyone involved a better understanding of overall county needs and what those needs will cost.

As the retreat wrapped up, each of the County Supervisors commented on the day’s work. All were pleased with the candor and communication and feel all are better prepared for future needs.
Contracts/Purchasing Staff Plays Important Role in Professional Conference

Last week, the Contracts and Purchasing staff was very busy with additional duties: attending a yearly educational conference as well as conducting a seminar during the conference.

The conference was held by CAPPO, the California Association of Public Procurement Officials. Contracts/Purchasing Officer Mike Derr explains why participating in this conference was beneficial for his staff:

Q. What is CAPPO and how does participating in this organization benefit your department?

CAPPO was formed on October 14, 1915 and is the second oldest procurement organization in the world. Its purpose is to improve the public procurement profession as well as provide a place for sharing best practices and offering education.

By participating, county staff has the benefit of embracing and practicing the adopted “Code of Ethics” of the organization which the members have come to embrace. CAPPO members exchange ideas in an effort to resolve problems affecting California's public agencies by sharing information on technical advances, cost factors, new laws, and sources for products. This open collaboration helps to strengthen the skills of public procurement officials as they fulfill their responsibilities to the public they serve. Membership benefits include regular educational seminar as well as professional information such as certification assistance and networking.

I’ve been a member of CAPPO for more than ten years now, and became a member of its Board of Directors in 2013.

Q. This year’s event was held in Monterey. How did that come to be?

To help out our statewide members, in odd-numbered years, the annual conference is in Northern California and in even-numbered years in Southern California. This Monterey was the chosen site.

The conference lasted five days and offered more than 26 different speakers from throughout the United States and more than 45 different sessions. Topics included:

- Procurement, Prevailing Wage Laws
- Purchasing Ethics
- Economic Forecast
- Next Generation of Procurements
- Contract Management Maturity
- Bias Protection during the Evaluation Process
• Power Purchase Agreements
• Software Contracts

The Contracts/Purchasing Team was also responsible for hosting and presenting a Pro-D session on the County’s newly developed Contracts Purchasing Academy which was well attended by more than 60 participants. I took advantage of the conference being hosted right here in Monterey as an opportunity to send the entire team to participate in the conference.

Sheriff’s Office Warns of Hottest Scams of 2015

Monterey County is not immune to scams, and there are so many types of these criminal enterprises that the Sheriff’s Office is warning folks to watch out and not be fooled.

Some of the ‘hottest’ scams this year will be ‘imposter’ scams. The Sheriff’s Crime Prevention Officer offers descriptions of these scams and how they work.

The IRS Scam:

How it works: Tax season will be soon upon us, and scammers posing as IRS officials continue to call, saying you owe taxes and better pay up. They threaten to arrest or deport people, revoke a license, or even shut down a business. How do they do it? By rigging caller ID information to appear as if the IRS is calling, and sometimes even making a follow-up call claiming to be the police or the DMV.

What to do: Remember, the IRS will not call you on the phone; if they need to start a conversation with you, they will do it by official paper mail. If you owe — or think you owe — federal taxes, call the IRS at 800-829-1040 or go to irs.gov; IRS workers can help you with your payment questions.

The Tech Support Scam

How it works: A technical support scam usually starts as a phone call from a person pretending to be with “Microsoft” or “Windows” who tries to trick victims into believing that their computer is infected or is “sending signals” indicating there is a problem. Then the sale pitch starts, with the caller trying to convince the consumer to download worthless software or let the "technician" remotely access your computer. The fraudsters charge for their "help" and sometimes install malware on computers while they have
them under their control, allowing the cons to steal your money and/or your personal information.

**What to do**: If you think you have been a victim of this scam, download legitimate security software and then run it to scan your computer for viruses and malware. Change any passwords you gave out. If you paid for a service with a credit card, call your provider to stop/reverse the charges. You can also file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission at ftc.gov/complaint.

**Jury Duty Scam**

**How it works**: A caller identifies himself as an officer of the court. He says you failed to report for jury duty and that a warrant is out for your arrest. You say you never received a notice. To clear it up, the caller says he’ll need some information for “verification purposes”—your birth date, Social Security number, maybe even a credit card number. Facing the unexpected threat of arrest, victims are caught off guard and may be quick to part with some information to defuse the situation.

**What to do**: Hang up the phone and call the local police to report the incident. Court officers never ask for confidential information over the phone; they generally correspond with prospective jurors by mail.

**The Grandparent Scam**

**How it works**: There have been lots of cases of this scam last year. This is when you get a phone call from someone saying that your grandchild or another loved one is in trouble. The con artist pretends to be a grandchild or someone helping the grandchild in need of emergency funds. The fraudster convinces the grandparent that they are helping a grandchild pay for transportation home from a foreign country, for medical treatment, or bail.

**What to do**: Don’t fall for it. Independently check on the status of your family member first; don’t provide any personal information; and don’t wire any money. If you have gotten a call like this contact your local Attorney General’s Office (naag.org).

Questions about these scams and others? Contact the Sheriff’s Crime Prevention Unit at 759-6675 or 647-7909.