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Chico center to perform same-sex marriages

By Staff Reports
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CHICO -- Following a decision to end marriage ceremonies at the Butte County Clerk-Recorder's Office, the Chico Peace and Justice Center will offer the civil service to same-sex marriages.

A press release issued Friday stated the center will offer the civil service for free beginning Tuesday.

On May 15, the California Supreme Court declared the state Constitution protects a fundamental "right to marry" that extends to same-sex couples.

Earlier in the week Butte County Clerk-Recorder Candace Grubbs said she would no longer perform civil marriages due to budget cuts that were decided in March.

Same-sex couples planning to marry need to obtain a license through the clerk-recorder's office at 25 County Center Drive in Oroville.

Licenses are \$77 and blood tests are no longer required. Couples must appear together with identification, know their parents' full names and states they were born in, as well as their mother's maiden name.

The ceremonies will be performed by Susan Tchudi, an ordained minister of the Universal Life Church, and Pastor David Moss of Trinity United Methodist Church in Chico.

Same-sex couples who wish to be married may call the center to schedule a time to talk with either officiant before they make their union legal.

"Pastor Moss and Susan Tchudi would like time in advance to talk with the couple, as they would with a heterosexual couple, to be sure that there is a deep commitment," center executive director Sue Hilderbrand said.

"We're

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going to just open our doors and see what happens. The board decided to do (the marriage services) for free, but if people want to donate to our operating expenses, that's fine," Hilderbrand told the E-R Friday. "It's a matter of giving us a call and I'll connect people and Tuesday the weddings can begin."

Weddings will be in the Chico Peace and Justice Garden. Reservations may be made by calling 893-9078.

The center is at 526 Broadway.

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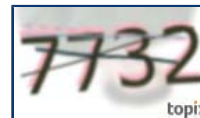
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