



**SEPTEMBER 20, 2011**

## **NEWS YOU CAN USE**

**TRANSIT'S NEW BUS LOCATOR SYSTEM DEBUTS ONLINE:** At the Sept. 19 Council meeting, Transit Manager Monty Cox and Senior Analyst Gamaliel Anguiano demonstrated the new Automatic Vehicle Locator System and Public Online Access Program which debuts online today. The system provides increased customer information, improved planning assistance, and faster response Transit contracted with Digital Recorders to provide an automatic vehicle locator system for the public transit buses. The system uses a cell phone signal to transmit and update dispatchers of the vehicle's location, time point history, and alarms. The system was implemented in response to the growing need for improved bus monitoring and increased public transit information. It also provides added customer and driver security. A link on the transit website allows the public to view buses along the route. In addition, passengers can set an alarm on their computer to notify them when the bus they need is arriving enabling them time to get to the bus stop. For more information, go to the Transit webpage by clicking [here](#).

**CENTRAL VISALIA OFF-RAMP ON 198 TO CLOSE SEPT. 22 FOR TWO MONTHS:** The Department of Transportation (Caltrans) will close the eastbound State Route 198, Central Visalia off-ramp beginning on Thursday, Sept. 22 (weather permitting), to construct a retaining wall as the first phase of a ramp widening project. The off ramp will be closed for approximately two months and is scheduled to re-open by the end of November. CalTrans will put up signage on 198 between Demaree and Mooney Boulevard suggesting alternate routes.

**CITY TO HOLD FLOOD ZONE AREA MEETING ON SEPT. 29:** The City of Visalia will hold a meeting for owners of property in Visalia's flood zone areas at 6 p.m. Sept. 29 at Valley Oak Middle School, 2000 N. Lovers Lane, Visalia. City staff members will update property owners on status of flood zone designation and inform attendees of availability of coverage through Private Flood Insurance Program. Information: Jason Huckleberry, 713-4259.

## **CITY COUNCIL MEETING RECAPS**

**COUNCIL AWARDS GRANTS TO NONPROFITS:** The City Council authorized the awarding of 26 non-profit grants totaling \$130,000 to agencies servicing youth in the City of Visalia. Although this amount is reduced from previous years, City Council has continued to prioritize funding for programs that keep youth out of gangs while serving as many agencies as possible even in these tough economic times. The Citizens Advisory Committee received 28 applications from 27 different agencies. A subcommittee recommendation was reviewed and adopted by the full CAC committee at their September 7 meeting. The grant guidelines require that at least 50% of the funding be allocated to programs designated as gang prevention/intervention with no agency eligible for more than 20% of the grant amount (\$26,000) and a minimum award amount of \$3,000. Statistics from this year's grant awards are as follows: Gang prevention/intervention awards - 74% of total; highest grant award - \$9,000; average grant award - \$5,000; average grant request - \$13,403.

Organizations receiving grants are as follows: American GI Forum for Northside Boxing Club, \$4,500; Assistance League of Visalia, \$6,500; Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Central California, \$3,000; Boys and Girls Club of Tulare County, \$6,000; CASA of Tulare County, \$4,500; Children's Health and Safety Services of Tulare County, \$3,000; Christ Lutheran Institute of Performing Arts, \$3,000; Community Services and Employment Training, \$3,000; Creative Center Foundation, \$3,000; Enchanted Playhouse, \$5,000; Family Services of Tulare County, \$5,000; FoodLink of Tulare County, \$3,000; Friends of Tulare County, \$3,000; Golden State YMCA, \$7,000; Happy Trails Riding Academy, \$5,000; Imagine U Children's Museum, \$7,500; Parenting Network Inc., \$8,000; Pro-Youth, \$5,000; Read for Life, \$6,000; Sequoia Council, Boy Scouts of America, \$9,000; Sequoia Riverlands Trust, \$7,000; Tulare County Symphony, \$3,000; Visalia Arts Consortium Inc., \$3,000; Visalia Police Activities League, \$11,000; WatchSTAR, \$6,000. For information on specific programs funded, click [here](#).

**COUNCIL NAMES TWO TO ELECTION PROCESS TASK FORCE:** At its Sept. 19 meeting, the Visalia City Council appointed two members to the Election Process Task Force recommended by Vice Mayor Amy Shuklian and Council Member Warren Gubler. The new members, Paul Chao and Maggie Florez, join these 10 Visalia residents on the Task Force: Robert Aguilar, Brody Blain, Phil Bourdette, Jennifer Gomez, Nathan Hernandez, Tom Johnson, Darlene Mata, Glenn Morris, Stephen Peck and Harry Wood. Vice Mayor Shuklian, Councilman Gubler and the 12 task force members will choose the final member. The task force will be responsible for considering several areas, including: Reviewing the types of City Council election formats being used in other cities that comply with federal and state election law; considering whether the Council should consider changing how it is elected, including the implementation of a by-district election process, and; considering the current demographic and voter makeup statistics in the 2010 Census and recent election data, and how these statistics relate to whether and how the City's election process should be changed. Based on the research, the Task Force will then make a recommendation on if an at-large election is still appropriate for the City, how many districts would be included if a by-district election is recommended, and other changes to the election process.

**OTHER COUNCIL NEWS:** In other action,

- Council approved a Memorandum of Understanding between the Workforce Investment Board (WIB) and the City of Visalia. This is a non-financial agreement between the City of Visalia and the WIB to collaborate when it is mutually beneficial to promote and secure a thriving economy by helping employers obtain qualified, skilled employees and job seekers to obtain skills and training to meet the employer's expectations of job seekers.
- Council awarded a construction contract for the St. John's River Park, Riverwalk Improvement Project, in the amount of \$395,192.50 to Elite Landscaping Incorporated. The St. John's River Park, Riverwalk project is located on Ben Maddox and the St. John's River Park in northeast Visalia, adjacent to the St. John's River and will further develop 5 acres of park land along St. John's River Park.

## **CITY CALENDAR**

**COMPETITION FIERCE IN CITY'S CORPORATE GAMES:** Local businesses and agencies are facing off during the City of Visalia Corporate Games, which continue through Sept. 23. Teams compete in a variety of events earning points in an effort to become the 2011 Corporate Games Champion. As of the end of competition on Sept. 19, Kaweah Delta was first with a total of 296 points, City of Visalia and Visalia Unified School District in a dead heat with 246 points apiece., Visalia Ceremic Tile in fourth with 226, and Ben-E-Lect rounding out the top five with 170. A total of 14 teams are competing in this year's events. Tonight's events are 3-on-3 Basketball at the Anthony Community Center, 346 S. Jacob St., and Dodgeball at the Manuel Hernandez Center, 247 W. Ferguson. Game on at 6 p.m. For more information, go to [liveandplayvisalia.com](http://liveandplayvisalia.com).

**TASTE THE ARTS SEPT. 29-OCT. 1:** Visalia's Taste the Arts, a festival held September 29 through October 1 celebrates the richness and diversity of the arts in Tulare County and gives artists, musicians, performers, and art organizations from throughout the county an opportunity to show off the best of their work through performances, exhibits, and demonstrations. Taste the Arts is part of the City's Cultural Arts Plan, which is implemented by the Arts Consortium and debuted as an opportunity for residents and visitors to experience, or "taste", the area's arts first-hand. This year's event is kicked off by the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Waiters Race, and a free street concert with the up and coming "Free Energy". Friday features the Creative Center's Art Xposed Hair and Fashion show and the renowned "Blind Boys of Alabama". Garden Street will be lined with festive tents on Oct. 1, with more than 35 artists displaying their work. An Urban Art Show, Visalia Farmer's Market food sculpture contest, and clay wheel will give the public an opportunity to move from spectator to participant. Bands and musicians, including *Phil Walker* and *Occasional Brass*, will entertain the crowd as they stop for a drink or food at local favorite gathering spot - the Garden Street Plaza. Around the corner, youth from Kids Edition, YMCA, Dance Arts, the Ruby Slipper Performing Arts Academy and SoundNVision will take the stage with song and dance. At 6 pm, the newly formed Visalia Opera Company presents "Saints and Sinners" at the 210. At 7 pm, the Enchanted Playhouse Theatre Company presents "James & the Giant Peach", featuring local actors of all ages. And at 8 pm, the night ends with a free performance by the Tulare County Symphony performing crowd pleasing selections from their Pops in the Park collection at the beautiful Visalia Fox Theatre. This will definitely not be the weekend to be out of town.

**CHAMBER HOSTS CANDIDATES FORUMS:** The Visalia Chamber of Commerce

will host a Coffee with the Candidates, including City Council candidates, from 8 to 10 a.m. on Thursday, Oct. 6 at 210, 210 W. Center Ave. The League of Women Voters is also hosting a Candidates Forum from 7 to 9 p.m. on Monday, Sept. 26 at 210.

*You can now self-subscribe to receive issues of “Inside City Hall”. Go to the City’s website at [www.ci.visalia.ca.us](http://www.ci.visalia.ca.us), click on About Visalia and go to Inside City Hall Newsletter. For information, contact Community Relations Manager Nancy Loliva at [nloliva@ci.visalia.ca.us](mailto:nloliva@ci.visalia.ca.us) or call 713-4535.*