

Inside City Hall

Beyond the headlines

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SUMMIT 'STEPS UP' GANG AWARENESS EFFORTS:

The City of Visalia and Tulare County team up to present a Gang Summit titled "Step Up to Solutions" on Thursday, Dec. 6, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Visalia Convention Center. Keynote speakers will be Paul Seave, recently appointed by Gov. Schwarzenegger as the State's Director over Gang and Youth Violence Policy, and U.S. Attorney McGregor Scott. Tickets are \$25 per person, and are available on-line at www.stepuptc.com. Click on the "Register Today" link to go to the online registration form.



PROGRESS MADE IN WASHINGTON SCHOOL, OVAL NEIGHBORHOODS:

A journey begins with a single step, and the Housing and Economic Development Department has made huge strides in its first six months. After identifying and assessing issues for both the Oval and Washington School neighborhoods, strategies and next steps were presented to the City Council by Director Ricardo Noguera, Neighborhood Preservation Manager Tim Burns, and Visalia Police Sgt. Dave Jarrett. Steps taken to improve the neighborhoods include: Establishing a community campus to deliver job training and employment for Oval area residents; rehabilitating single family homes in both neighborhoods; forming a partnership with C-SET for the City's First-Time Homebuyers Program; using a Transportation Planning Grant awarded by CalTrans to improve pedestrian and vehicle safety in the Oval area; and the closure of a crime-plagued, trash-filled alleyway at Bridge and Noble. Possible action steps for the future include establishing a historic homes down payment assistance program to maximize homeownership and historic property maintenance, utilizing low to moderate income redevelopment funds to acquire vacant lots and abandoned homes to sell to first-time homeowners, addressing infrastructure and parking deficiencies, and working with the Visalia Police and Parks and Recreation to develop youth intervention programs. Stakeholder meetings will be held in the Oval and Washington School neighborhoods in the next two to three months, and staff will present recommendations to the Council in February.

ACEQUIA TAKING A NEW DIRECTION: The conversion of Acequia Avenue from one-way to two-way between Conyer and Bridge Streets moves forward with the Council's approval of an agreement between Robert N. Trout and the city for the signal, striping and signage design for Acequia. The conversion is one of the projects that is being partially funded by Measure "R". Sole sourcing the project with Trout allows for the conversion before the opening of Kaweah Delta District Hospital expansion, which is scheduled for November, 2008. The conversion changes the configuration of three lanes one way to the east to one lane in each of the east and west directions with a continuous left turn lane, and left turn pockets at signalized intersections, in the center of the roadway. It will also add a signal at Willis Street and Acequia Avenue, and modify the signals at Acequia with West, Court and Locust Streets.

Inside City Hall is a publication of the City of Visalia.

For more information, visit the City's website at www.ci.visalia.ca.us, email nloliva@ci.visalia.ca.us or call 713-4535

VISALIA POLICE SALUTE LOCAL 'HERO': Visalian Richard Rodriguez received a Citizen Commendation at the Oct. 29 City Council meeting. "When summoned for assistance by a fellow citizen in dire need, he rose to the occasion," Assistant Police Chief Dennis Swiney read from a resolution for Rodriguez. On Sept. 21, Rodriguez intervened in an assault against a woman who was being accosted by an intoxicated parolee. It was evident that the attack most likely would have continued had it not been for his heroic efforts. Swiney added, "Mr. Rodriguez exemplifies the outstanding caliber of citizenry residing in Visalia. He not only prevented a furtherance of the attack, but he also detained the assailant for the responding police units."

ELECTION NIGHT RETURNS: The public is invited to watch election returns come in on Election Night, Tuesday, Nov. 6, beginning at 8 p.m. in City Council Chambers. Get the latest returns and find out who your new City Council and School Board members will be. Refreshments will be provided.

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A DAY MAKES: A total of 800 hours were given by 300 volunteers who participated in community projects on Saturday, Oct. 27, Make a Difference Day. Groups participating included Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Church, Destiny Church, First Christian Reformed Church, First Nazarene Church, Redwood High School Key Club, Environmental Club, and the FAA Club, Provost and Prichard Engineering, Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts, County Center Rotary, and Visalia Master Gardeners.

VISALIA FIREFIGHTERS ON FRONT LINES OF SO. CA FIRES: One engine's back and one engine remains to fight the Southern California fires. A few hours after the fires began early Sunday morning, Oct. 21, the Visalia Fire Department responded by sending one engine, four firefighters, and Battalion Chief Danny Wristen to the Malibu fire incident. At 8 p.m. that night, a second engine staffed with three firefighters was sent to the Riverside area. Both were assigned to a strike team and moved from one fire to another until these emergencies were brought under control. Chief Wristen and his unit remain in Southern California to fight the San Diego fires. Each time a unit left the City, off-duty personnel were called back to fill the void. The actions of our own are to be commended during this terrible disaster.

IF ARTS ARE YOUR PASSION, THIS FORUM'S FOR YOU: Residents of Visalia will have an opportunity to share their opinions about the community's arts, cultural, and heritage activities at a free public input session on Wednesday, Nov. 14, from 7 to 8:30 p.m., at the Visalia Convention Center, 303 E. Acequia Ave. The Cultural Arts Plan for Visalia is a community initiative to ensure the long-term vitality of our region's valuable arts and cultural organizations and venues. A plan will be unveiled in 2008 with a comprehensive action plan and recommendations to broaden the success of arts and cultural organizations in the future.

GRANT TO TARGET WOULD-BE GANG MEMBERS: Former gang members could soon become role-models in the community with help from a state grant. Visalia's Multi-Agency Gang Intervention Task Force agreed to support an application by the City of Visalia for a \$500,000 grant under Gov. Schwarzenegger's CalGRIP (Gang Reduction, Intervention and Prevention) Initiative. Task Force leaders want to use the funds to expand the role of neighborhood youth counselors throughout Visalia. "These counselors play a large role in what needs to be done," said Visalia Police Chief Bob Carden. Others feel the City has a good chance of obtaining funds with a unified approach. Funds or services required to match the state grant dollar for dollar also widens opportunities for needed resources.

DUI DETAIL NETS 9 ARRESTS: Officers with the Visalia, Tulare, Porterville, Exeter, Farmersville, and Woodlake Police Departments, the Visalia office of the California Highway Patrol, and Tulare County Probation Department conducted a DUI saturation detail Oct. 27, in Visalia. Dinuba Officers also conducted a patrol in Dinuba. Nine arrests were made for driving under the influence, 13 vehicles were towed, 15 field sobriety tests were administered, 24 miscellaneous citations were issued, and 1 warrant arrest was made. Funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

CABLE SHOW HIGHLIGHTS CITY'S GANG SUPPRESSION EFFORTS: Comcast Cable's monthly program, "Tulare County Reports", will feature Visalia Mayor Jesus Gamboa and Visalia Police Chief Bob Carden discussing the City's suppression and prevention efforts in dealing with the gang issue. The program airs on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings at 7 p.m. throughout November on Comcast Cable Local Affiliate Channel 14.

GRANT HELPS CATCH DUI OFFENDERS: A state grant will allow Visalia Police to assist the Sheriff's Department and the California Highway Patrol in catching drunken drivers. The four-year, \$397,000 grant from the state Office of Traffic Safety will establish a collaborative program among Tulare County law enforcement agencies to increase DUI checkpoints, special enforcement, multi-agency task force and saturation operations, and court stings. The three agencies will use combined resources to expand enforcement measures in different areas of the County. State records show that 45 people were killed and 480 injured in alcohol-related collisions in Tulare County last year.

GRANT TO PAY FOR 18 BULLETPROOF VESTS: A grant totaling \$4,792.88 was recently awarded to the Visalia Police Department through the Bulletproof Vest Partnership. The unique Department of Justice initiative is designed to provide a critical resource to state and local law enforcement. Since 1999, over 11,900 jurisdictions have participated in the program, which has supported the purchase of an estimated 642,000 vests.

PAL FINDS NEW HOME: The Visalia Police Activities League will soon be able to have all its activities under one roof when it moves to its new home at Race Avenue and Burke Street. Visalia Planning Commissioners approved plans to establish a new recreation center at the 3-acre site, formerly the home of a CalTrans yard. Work is expected to take several months. Activities at the site include a boxing program, homework and computer labs, arts and crafts, video and learning programs, and cultural activities and classes. Up to 70 children a day are expected to participate in programs at the site.

CATCH UP ON YOUR Z'S-TIME CHANGES NOV. 4: Don't miss your chance to grab an extra hour of sleep. Daylight Savings Time for the fall is set for Sunday, Nov. 4, one week later than normally done. The change is designed to maximize daylight and save energy as outlined under the Federal 2005 Energy Act Policy. So . . . don't forget to set all clocks back one hour on Nov. 4.

MARK YOUR EMPLOYEE CALENDARS: The 2007 City of Visalia Employee Service Awards will be held from 7 to 9 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 5, at the Visalia Convention Center. Employees with anniversary dates of 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, etc., years will be honored during this award ceremony . . . The City of Visalia Employee Holiday Party will be held Thursday, Dec. 13, at the Visalia Convention Center. Stay tuned for more details on this annual event.