



Volume 23

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COUNCIL APPROVES \$7.74 MILLION IN STADIUM RENOVATIONS: At Monday's meeting, the Visalia City Council approved \$7.74 million for improvements to the Recreation Park, home of the Visalia Oaks. The funds will be used to build a two-story brick structure along the right field line of the park, and will include more seating, a hospitality lounge, team offices and bullpens. The six-month construction project is expected to begin in several weeks. The Oaks' home opener is April 17, and fans who visit the park this season will get to observe the progress of the construction. The project is a scaled-back version from the one team and city officials originally envisioned. An \$11.6 million two-phase renovation plan was approved in the fall for the 62-year-old, city-owned baseball stadium. But city officials had to reconsider their options after bids for the first phase of the project were higher than expected. New estimates showed the original plan would have cost an estimated \$18 million, something city officials said they couldn't afford. The City Council voted 4-1 to approve the \$7.74 million bid from Seals/Biehle General Contractors of Visalia, who built the new Acequia Avenue downtown parking garage last year. Some improvements in the second phase of the project have been put on hold to keep costs within the \$11.6 million budget. Team officials had hoped to replace an existing grandstand with new suites and a press box. The city already has completed about \$2 million in improvements that included a picnic area and a third dugout for fans to view the game. The renovations are expected to help Recreation Park meet Major League Baseball's standard for minor league facilities.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND: Volunteer opportunities abound in Visalia – from its committees and commissions to volunteering through the Retired Senior Volunteer Program. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger today signed an Executive Order establishing a Cabinet-level service and volunteering position. Elevating volunteerism to Cabinet level will help California strengthen its already robust volunteer force, increase volunteer opportunities and improve state government coordination. "We're only as good as the people around us, and that includes volunteers," said Visalia Mayor Jesus Gamboa. "Visalia has a strong history of using volunteers on various committees, planning groups, etc." In his support of the Governor's Executive Order, Mayor Gamboa said, "The need is great, and cities can't do it alone. It takes everyone working together." The City of Visalia's Retired Senior Volunteer Program registered 722 volunteers in 2007. These volunteers provided 44,752 hours of service, with an estimated annual value of \$807,773.60. Traditionally, volunteer time has been estimated using a single dollar value for all types of volunteering. The Value of Volunteer Time, which is updated annually, is made available by Independent Sector. The current rate is \$18.05 per hour. There are currently openings on seven City Committees: Seven on the Beautification Committee; two on the Bicycle, Pedestrian, Waterways, and Trails Committee; two on the Citizen's Advisory Committee; one on the Disability Advocacy Committee; three on the Environmental Committee; one on the Historic Preservation Committee; and seven on the Visalia Youth Committee. The vacancies are both unscheduled and regularly scheduled term expirations. For more information on the committees, visit the City of Visalia's website at www.ci.visalia.ca.us. An informational handbook and application form are available online or by contacting the City Clerk's office at 713-4512. For information on volunteering through the Retired Senior Volunteer Program, call Ramon Sanchez at 713-4481.

COUNCIL'S MARCH MEETING SCHEDULE: The Visalia City Council will hold its regular meeting on Monday, March 3, at Council Chambers, 707 W. Acequia Ave. Work session begins at 4 p.m., and the regular session begins at 7 p.m. A joint meeting of the City Council and the Visalia Planning Commission will be held at 4 p.m. Monday, March 10, at the Visalia Convention Center, 303 E. Acequia Ave. The Council will hold a joint meeting with the College of the Sequoias Board at 4 p.m. Monday, March 17, at the Visalia Convention Center. The Council's work session follows the joint meeting at 5 p.m., with the regular session following at 7 p.m. at the Visalia Convention Center. A joint meeting with the City Council and the Parks and Recreation Commission will be held at 5 p.m. Monday, March 31, at the Visalia Convention Center.



ENERGY TIP—DIALING FOR DOLLARS: Is your thermostat accurate? Keeping control of your thermostat is one of the simplest ways you can save a great deal of energy—and money—all year round. During the winter, lowering your thermostat 1 degree (if it's set between 65 and 72 degrees F) can save you as much as 2 to 3% of the energy your furnace uses. Keep the thermostat under control. Recommended winter settings for heaters is 68 degrees in the daytime, 55 degrees at night. Make sure that the temperature near your thermostat is representative of the rest of the house. If it's in a drafty or sunny spot, you may be getting false readings and wasting energy.

PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS: The following new Public Works/Development Projects are being conducted the week of Feb. 25. This update provides information to the public only on projects that may interrupt major routes of transportation within the City of Visalia. For more information on Public Works projects, call the Public Works Customer Service Line at 713-4428.

1. Tidwell Excavation to install new Cable TV service for the Mooney Blvd widening – Cal Trans project on Tulare just east and west of Mooney Blvd. Days and hours of work being done: Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Date of expected completion: Feb. 29, 2008. Why work is being done: New fire service for new library expansion. Responsible Contractor/Contact: Tidwell Excavation, Tom 391-3457.
2. HCI & Irish Construction to raise manholes on Bridge Street between Main and Acequia. Days and hours of work being done: Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Date of expected completion: Feb. 29, 2008. Why work is being done: Due to new paving overlay. Responsible Contractor/Contact: HCI, Dick 264-2682 or Harry Sims 661-816-5504.
3. Southern California Edison pulling rope and cable in existing duct work throughout downtown from Stevenson to Santa Fe and from Mineral King to Center. Days and hours of work being done: Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Date of expected completion: Extended due to rain delays to Feb. 29, 2008. Why work is being done: SCE is upgrading and replacing deteriorated and old lines. Responsible Contractor/Contact: Irish Construction, Harry Sims 661-816-5504.
4. Installation of new natural gas regulation station on Walnut Avenue, east of Central Street. Days and hours of work being done: Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Date of expected completion: Extended due to rain delays to Feb. 29, 2008. Why work is being done: In preparation of the state's Mooney Boulevard widening project. Responsible Contractor/Contact: WM Lyles at 799-7860.
5. Multi-family housing at the southeast corner of Sunnyside and Lovers Lane. Days and hours of work being done: Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Date of expected completion: Extended to March 21, 2008, due to weather delays. Why work is being done: Installation of curb and gutter, sidewalks, and street widening. Responsible Contractor/Contact: L & S Grading and Paving, Larry Catrell at 686-8032.



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