

Inside City Hall

Beyond the headlines

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VISALIA RECEIVES \$280,417 GRANT FOR GANG PREVENTION:

Forty-six cities applied for state grants for gang prevention, intervention and enforcement, and the City of Visalia was one of 18 awarded a grant. The \$280,417 will be used to recruit neighborhood youth counselors to work within the boundaries of the Visalia Unified School District and at community centers to identify youth at risk of joining gangs. The funding will not only impact the City of Visalia, but also reach out to the communities of Goshen, Ivanhoe and Linnell Camp. "These monies will support the work that Visalia's Gang Prevention Task Force is doing in addressing gang activity in the city," added Mayor Gamboa. Community Services and Employment Training also received a \$400,000 employment development grant to provide a broad range of services to at-risk youth. The grants are part of the California Gang Reduction, Intervention and Prevention Initiative (CalGRIP). "I am highly encouraged by the announcement that we will be receiving this grant. This is good news for our area," said Visalia Police Chief Bob Carden. "The utilization of Neighborhood Youth Counselors to reach 'high risk' youth is an effective program that has had a positive impact in other communities."

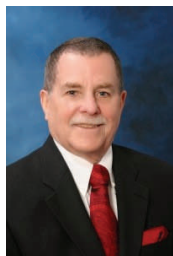


PLANNING COMMISSION SELECTION BEGINS: The recruitment and selection process has begun for a new member of the Planning Commission. Recruitment will be open until April 4, initial interviews will be on April 14 or April 28 at 4 p.m., with follow-up interviews if needed on April 28 or May 11 at 4 p.m.. An appointment will be made prior to June 1. The opening on the commission is for Member Sam Logan's term, which concludes in June. Mr. Logan has served two terms, one full term from June 2004 to June 2008, and more than half of an unexpired term from January 2002 to June 2004. According to policy and past practice, a Commission member appointed to fill an unexpired term who serves more than half that term is considered to have served a full term. In addition to Mr. Logan, the current Planning Commission is comprised of the following members: Vincent Salinas; Larry Segrue; Adam Peck; and Terese Lane, who was appointed by the City Council in May, 2007, to serve a four-year term.

NORTHWEST FIRE STATION CONSTRUCTION BID APPROVED: A groundbreaking in the works to kick-off construction of the Northwest Visalia Fire Station and Training center at Shirk Street and Ferguson Avenue. The City Council approved a \$6.87 million financing package, with \$314,695 from fire impact fees, \$162.115 from Measure T, and a \$3 million advance from the city's General Fund, which will most likely be converted to a loan through a local bank. The budget estimate was reduced in May 2006 from \$7.4 million to \$6.4 million.

BIKE LANES FOR ACEQUIA CONVERSION: City engineers head back to the drawing boards to include bicycle lanes in final plans for changing Acequia Avenue from a one-way to a two-way street. The proposed lanes won't be unbroken. Council members mandated that the downtown Post Office be clear of bike lanes. Putting bicycle lanes on Acequia between Conyer and Bridge streets would eliminate about 50 parallel-parking spaces. Acequia currently has 113 parking spaces. The two-way switch would improve traffic circulation, including access to and from the hospital by emergency vehicles. Public Works Director Andrew Benelli estimated the design work on the Acequia transition will take six months. He added that it was hoped construction could be completed by the opening of the hospital's north addition in January, 2009.

VISALIA'S VOICE' COLUMN DEBUTS: In this week's edition of the Valley Voice newspaper, a new column debuts. "Visalia's Voice" features a variety of authors on issues and programs of interest to the community. This week, City of Visalia's Vice Mayor Bob Link talks about the recent decision by City Council to approve funds for improvements to the Recreation Park Baseball Stadium. Here is an excerpt: "The decision has been made to move forward and make improvements to the Recreation Park Baseball Stadium. It was a well thought-out process that balanced the needs of the team and the budgetary constraints of the City. As we break ground and begin the renovations on this important community asset, I think it's important to understand the basis for the ultimate decision to approve a maximum budget of \$11.6 million for stadium improvements." Read the column in its entirety in this week's Valley Voice newspaper, on newsstands Thursday.



COMMERCIAL PERMITS UP 91%, BUILDING DOWN 12% FROM SAME TIME LAST YEAR: A total of 660 building permits were issued for the first two months of this year, down from 754, or 12 percent for the same time period in 2007. The value of all permits also was down, 15%, from \$50,423,409 for February 2007 to \$42,608,589 for February 2008. The one bright spot is in the area of new commercial projects. The number of new commercial projects were up by 91% - 21 from 11 — and the value was 178% higher—\$17,378,865 for February 2008 as compared to \$6,257,031 for February, 2007.

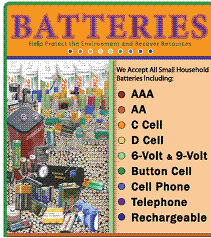
COUNCIL'S MARCH MEETING SCHEDULE: A joint meeting of the City Council and the Visalia Planning Commission will be held at 4 p.m. Monday, March 10, at the Visalia Convention Center, 303 E. Acequia Ave. The Council will hold a joint meeting with the College of the Sequoias Board at 4 p.m. Monday, March 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.



SPRING AHEAD IN THE WEE HOURS OF MARCH 9 FOR DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME: You might want to catch up on some extra sleep between now and 2 a.m. Sunday, March 9, when Daylight Savings Time begins. The Visalia Fire Department reminds us that it's also a good time to check your smoke detector's batteries and if needed—change them. A working smoke detector more than doubles a person's chance of surviving a home fire. More than 90 percent of homes in the U.S. have smoke detectors, but a third of those are estimated to have dead or missing batteries.



DAYLIGHT SAVINGS—TIME TO GO GREEN! The National Fire Protection Association and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission recommend that consumers change the battery in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors when they change the clocks for Daylight Savings Time.



The Natural Resource Conservation Department encourages you to dispose of your household batteries (AA, AAA, C, D, 9-volt and rechargeable) in one of the identified recycle locations throughout the City. The businesses that are currently supporting this project include: Visalia Senior Center, all three Walgreen's Drug Stores, Visalia Coffee Co, Curves, Lifestyles Center, Orchard Supply Hardware, Young's Market, Town Center Pharmacy, Provost & Prichard, Redwood High School, Visalia Library, Longs Drugs, 4335 W. Noble, Von's Grocery, Target, Rite Aid at 1735 E. Walnut Ave., Costco, Toys R Us, Food 4 Less at 2025 N. Dinuba Blvd., WinCo Foods, and Mt.

Whitney High School. Household batteries make up 10% to 25% of the hazardous waste stream and contain at least 22 toxic elements plus plastic and steel. All of these elements can be recovered and used in the re-manufacturing of new batteries and other consumer products, including mercury, lead, cadmium, chromium, manganese, silver, selenium and acids. While you have the ladder out to check your smoke detectors, why not change a bulb? Switching to energy efficient bulbs in your ceiling fixtures could save you \$30 a year per bulb on your electricity bill. Energy efficient lighting is particularly important in the fall when Daylight Saving Time ends and the days are shorter.

PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS: The following new and updated Public Works/Development Projects are being conducted the week of March 3. For more information on Public Works projects, call the Public Works Customer Service Line at 713-4428.



1. **(new) Pothole for new storm drain lateral on Crowe Street south of Tulare Avenue.** Days and hours of work being done: Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Date of expected completion: March 5, 2008. Why work is being done: For new multi-family dwelling units. Responsible Contractor/Contact: John Gorsky Construction at 732-5624.
2. **(new) Install new sanitary sewer offset manhole on the north edge of Houston Avenue between Lovers Lane and Norman Court.** Days and hours of work being done: Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Date of expected completion: March 5, 2008. Why work is being done: To remove the manhole from the curb line so curb and gutter can be installed. Responsible Contractor/Contact: P & G Construction, 804-7667.
3. **(new) Install new water line across Court Street between Granite and NE 4th.** Days and hours of work being done: Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Date of expected completion: March 7, 2008. Why work is being done: Replace deteriorated water line for Cal Water Service. Responsible Contractor/Contact: West Valley Construction, Tim Clark at 732-7447.
4. **(new) Installation 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 March 4, 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. **(Update) Road widening and median island installation on Walnut Avenue from Simon Street to Casablanca Street.** Days and hours of work being done: Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Date of expected completion: Extended to Feb. 29, 2008, due to developer-driven water main tie-in issues and weather delays. Why work is being done: For the new subdivision on the south side of Walnut Avenue. Responsible Contractor/Contact: Crawford Construction, Russ Anderson at 908-9949.
6. **(Update) Building remodel construction at Garden, Center, and Bridge Streets.** Days and hours of work being done: Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Date of expected completion: Extended to March 14, 2008, due to weather-related issues and developer extension request. Why work is being done: Replacement of curb and gutter, sidewalks, and drive approaches. Responsible Con-

tractor/Contact: Mangano Homes, Inc., Evert Dixon at 804-5333.