

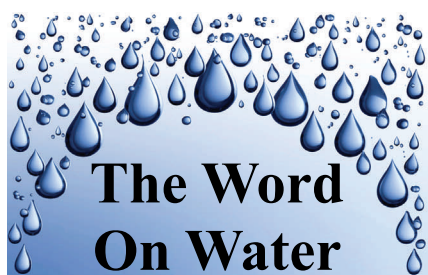
Inside City Hall

Beyond the headlines

Volume 24

June 18, 2008

WATER EMERGENCY DECLARED: With two consecutive years of below-average rainfall, very low snowmelt runoff and the largest court-ordered water transfer restrictions in state history, Governor Schwarzenegger recently proclaimed a statewide drought and issued an Executive Order directing immediate state action to deal with the crisis. The Governor also proclaimed a water emergency in nine Central Valley counties including Tulare County. To illustrate the severity of this water emergency in Visalia, currently the average depth of water under the City



is 102 feet, which is 8 feet deeper than last year and 12 feet deeper than the underground water depth in 2003. The City of Visalia recognizes the scarcity of natural resources, particularly water resources, and is developing additional policies to mitigate the shortage. Given the crisis, adherence to the Water Conservation Ordinance is particularly important this summer. You can view a copy of the ordinance at the Natural Resource Conservation webpage at www.ci.visalia.ca.us. You can also view tips on ways to conserve water in and outside the home. To put residential water use in per-

spective, statistics show single family water use in the Visalia District at 64 percent of the total District demand. Cal Water estimates for the last two years show that water usage for Visalia District increases 3 times during the months of January to July, most of which is believed to be attributed to irrigation of landscaping. The City is monitoring the availability of outside the basin water purchases to help offset the overdraft. The City of Visalia's Natural Resources Division recently approved the purchase of up to 1000-acre feet of available surface water (which equates to 325,851 gallons for every acre foot of water) to help recharge the city's water basins and also was able to take advantage of 188 acre feet of available flood release water from the Army Corps of Engineers early this year. For more information on Water Conservation, call Natural Resources at 713-4532.

WORD ON BUDGET—CONSERVATIVE: The City Council got its first look at the proposed budget for Fiscal years 2008-09 and 2009-10. Facing perhaps the greatest financial uncertainty in the City's history, staff recommended a conservative budget to withstand State take-aways and further economic declines without creating a crisis in services. The total budget for 2008-09 is \$161,935,021 and \$162,486,400 for 2009-10. The General Fund faces the greatest pressure, with almost 75 percent of its revenues coming from sales and property taxes which have flattened in a slowing economy. The budget recommends, in part, appropriating only \$750,000 of General Fund capital projects, freezing remaining proposed projects and freezing personnel. A detailed overview of the budget currently under consideration can be found at <http://www.ci.visalia.ca.us/civica/filebank/blobdload.asp?BlobID=5463>. Under the City's Charter, the budget must be approved by July 1.

CSET OFFERS FORECLOSURE COUNSELING: Community Services and

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

Employment Training (CSET) offers a Foreclosure Counseling Hotline at 559-741-4646 to provide assistance for homeowners facing foreclosure. Possible workout solutions with lenders can include loan modification, repayment plans, forbearance, or other solutions. For more information, go to the CSET website at www.cset.org.

GREAT LAKES REBIDS FOR SERVICE: City Council members voted unanimously to endorse Great Lakes' proposal for two round trips daily between Visalia and either McCarran International Airport in Las Vegas or to Ontario International Airport in Ontario. Great Lakes was the only company offering a new bid for a subsidized federal contract to serve Visalia and Merced. Great Lakes Aviation, based in Cheyenne, Wyo., was the only airline to respond by the June 13 deadline to a request by the U.S. Department of Transportation to serve the two Valley cities. The previous airline serving Visalia and Merced, Air Midwest, ceased its service to Las Vegas on May 31 as part of a nationwide shutdown. Visalia Municipal Airport Manager Mario Cifuentez said Ontario surfaced as an option because of the difficulties Great Lakes has encountered since last fall in arranging ground services and ticketing agreements with United Airlines, its proposed partner in Las Vegas. "It's important to get flying again quickly," Cifuentez told the City Council. "If folks get comfortable with not having service in Visalia, it will be very difficult to restart it." He said Ontario provides opportunities for business travelers hankering for flights into Southern California since Skywest Airlines pulled out of Visalia in September 2005. He added that since 2005, Las Vegas has emerged as a popular option for flights from Visalia.

19 NON-PROFITS GET BOOST IN FUNDING: More local nonprofit groups will be getting assistance from the city this year in their efforts to help children and teens. Visalia City Council members voted this week to allocate \$167,330 to 19 nonprofit organizations in the 2008-09 budget year that begins July 1. The vote affirmed a recommendation by the city's Citizens Advisory Committee, tasked by the council to review the merit of the grant applications. The dollar amount is the same as this year, when 16 groups received the city's help for their programs. This year, 26 organizations applied for grants, seeking a total of more than \$500,000. Seven groups were left out of the recommendation by the advisory committee, committee Chairman Dirk Holkeboer said. The grants are intended for programs serving people under 18 within the city, with an emphasis on gang prevention for low-income or at-risk children. While the pot of money has grown over the past decade, it hasn't kept up with demand. "It's a balancing act of priorities and limited funding," Holkeboer said. "The argument could be made for any agency to receive additional funding, but if one gets more, someone else gets less." This is the third year the Citizens Advisory Committee has handled the screening and recommending chores for the aid.

DO YOU CALL AND DRIVE? READ ON: Beginning July 1, a new law goes into effect which prohibits a person from driving a motor vehicle while using a wireless telephone unless it is specifically designed to allow hands-free listening and talking, and is used in that manner while driving. Violations are punishable by a base fine of \$20 for a first offense and \$50 for each subsequent offense. The law does not apply to people using a wireless telephone for emergency purposes, including an emergency call to law enforcement, health care provider, fire department, or other emergency services agencies.

COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE: Mark your calendars. A joint meeting with the City Council and Kaweah Delta District Hospital Board will be held at 5:30 p.m. Monday, June 23, in the Blue Room at Kaweah Delta Hospital, 400 W. Mineral King Ave. The Council will hold a work session at 4 p.m., followed by a Special Session Monday, July 14, at the Visalia Convention Center, 303 E. Acequia Ave. For information on agendas for specific meetings, go to the City's website at www.ci.visalia.ca.us.



PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS: The following Public Works/Development Projects are being conducted during the week of June 16.

1. Install new underground electrical conduits on Mooney and Riggins Avenues from Ferguson to Corvina Avenues. Days and hours of work being done: Monday thru Friday 8am – 4 pm. Date of expected completion: June 28, 2008. Why work is being done: For the new Edison substation. Responsible Contractor/Contact: SCE, Don Theall 805-494-7090.
2. Excavations on Mineral King Avenue east of Locust Street. Days and hours of work being done: Monday 7 am – 5 pm. Date of expected completion: June 16, 2008. Why work is being done: Verify depths of existing AT&T conduit banks. Responsible Contractor/Contact: P & G Constr., Scott 651-2200.
3. Replace water lines along Houston Avenue between Santa Fe and Ben Maddox Streets. Days and hours of work being done: Monday thru Friday 8am – 4 pm. Date of expected completion: August 1, 2008. Why work is being done: In preparation of a City street reconstruction project. Responsible Contractor/Contact: West Valley Const., Tim 732-7447.
4. Install fire hydrant and services at 2404 W. Main St. between Woodland and Sunset. Days and hours of work being done: Monday thru Friday 8am – 4 pm. Date of expected completion: June 20, 2008. Why work is being done: For a new office complex. Responsible Contractor/Contact: West Valley Const., Tim 732-7447.
5. Install fire hydrant and services on the south side of Ferguson Ave approximately 150 feet west of Dinuba Blvd. Days and hours of work being done: Monday thru Friday 8am – 4 pm. Date of expected completion: June 16, 2008. Why work is being done: For a new CVS pharmacy at the Northside Shopping Center. Responsible Contractor/Contact: West Valley Const., Shawn 732-7447.
6. Install new water line on Lovers Lane between Sunnyside and 1100 ft south of Lovers Lane. Days and hours of work being done: Monday thru Friday 8am – 4 pm. Date of expected completion: July 2, 2008. Why work is being done: For the new Calvary Chapel church campus. Responsible Contractor/Contact: Todd Plumbing, Tim 651-5820.

