

Inside City Hall

Beyond the headlines

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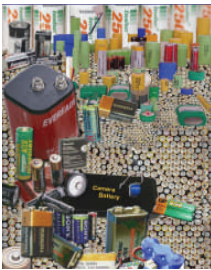
CITY LAUNCHES FIRST CITIZENS IN THE KNOW PROGRAM: The Visalia City Council Monday approved the launch of the City's first "Citizens in the Know" program. Council members have identified increased citizen participation as one of its top priorities. "Citizens in the Know" is a six-week program featuring Council members and City staff who will present information on Visalia's history, planning, public safety, services, and the Council's vision for the future. The program will run for five consecutive Wednesdays, beginning Oct. 1, from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m., with a city tour on Saturday, Nov. 1, from 9 a.m. to noon. To participate, citizens must be a resident of Visalia, be at least 18 years of age, and commit to attending all six weeks of the program. Enrollment is limited to up to 25 eligible applicants. Applications are available on-line at www.ci.visalia.ca.us, and are due by Friday, Sept. 25, by FAX at 713-4800 or by mail or hand-delivered at 425 E. Oak St., Suite 301, Visalia, CA 93291. For more information, contact Community Relations Manager Nancy Loliva at 713-4535 or by email at nloliva@ci.visalia.ca.us.



WATER WASTERS, BEWARE: The City's Water Conservation Education Coordinators got a boost in enforcement Monday from City Council. New guidelines were presented which reduces from up to three to up to two the number of water-ordinance warnings before citations are issued and fines assessed for those found in violation of the city's watering policy. Groundwater, which accounts for 100 percent of the city's water supply, is at least 107 feet below the ground, which compares to 10 feet down in 1948. Council Member Don Landers urged California Water Service Company official Phil Mirwald to speed the process of installing water meters in 17,500 of Visalia's 35,000 homes which are billed at a flat rate regardless of water consumption. For more information on the City's watering policy, go to www.ci.visalia.ca.us.

FIREFIGHTERS TAKE THE HEAT STATEWIDE: Two engines staffed with Visalia Fire Department crews have been working around the State since June 22. One engine has been out of Tulare County the entire time, and worked at the Oliver Fire in Madera County and the Piute fire in Kern County. After 13 days, the original crew was switched with a new crew, which continued to work the Piute fire until July 7. At that time they were sent to Ukiah, and are currently doing mop-up work. The original crew members are Captain Darrin Hughes, Engineer Allen Wilkinson, and Firefighters Dameon Malek, and Franklin Franzen. They were relieved by Captain Mike Cromer, Engineer Larry Fielden, and Firefighters Jason Costa and Russ Ordonia. The crews stay out up to 2 weeks at a time, then they must be switched. Once they are on a strike team, they can be moved to any part of California, or any part of the United States for that matter. There are currently strike teams from over 40 States

operating strike teams at fires in California. Fire crews received an order on July 7 due to a flare-up of the Piute fire. They are currently working there until further notice. The crew is staffed by Captain Teresa Lovero, Engineer Jeff Macumber, firefighter Jerry Hernandez, and firefighter Nick Branch. Battalion Chief Danny Wristen was the strike team leader for the first Tulare strike team until July 5. After two days off, he was reassigned to a new strike team that was formed for use in Tulare County only. He will be on this assignment until further notice. The Visalia Fire Department's Engine 1 crew, (Capt. Cromer, Engineer Fielden, and Firefighters Costa and Ordonia) is currently working out of Laytonville in Mendocino County at the Lost Pipe fire. They have had a variety of details over the last week, including structure protection, some wild land mop-up work, and picking up some local calls for service., including a structure fire. They are currently answering local calls for service. Engine 2's crew (Capt. Bill Alves, Engineer Macumber, and Firefighters Hernandez and Branch) has gone from the Lake Isabella area to the Madera area. They are currently staged in Chowchilla awaiting for their next assignment, after spending a lot of time on the move over the last week bolstering units that are in place.



BATTERY RECYCLING MADE EASY: If you're wondering what to do with those dead batteries you just replaced in your smoke alarms or cell phones, there are 25 answers to your problem throughout Visalia. The following batteries can be turned in at any one of 25 locations throughout Visalia: AAA; AA; C Cell; D Cell; Button Cell; cell phone; telephone; rechargeable, and; 6-volt and 9-volt batteries. Protect the environment by recovering these resources. For the location of a battery recycling container near you, call 713-4532, or visit the city's website at www.ci.visalia.ca.us.

23 ORGANIZATIONS HELP PROMOTE HEALTHY AIR LIVING WEEK:

The City of Visalia was one of 23 organization which pledged to be a Healthy Air Living partner during the "Healthy Air Living Week", July 7-13. Many City employees chose to participate in the "Communte Green in the San Joaquin" challenge during the Healthy Air Living kick-off week. You can review your organization's score by clicking on <http://www.healthyairliving.com/CommuteGreenFrame.htm>, and then again on **See Current Results**. A total of 6,620 alternate commutes were reported for participating local organizations during the challenge. These organizations ranged in size from 5 employees to 6,714 employees. "Try Transit Day", was very popular, enabling city residents to ride for free all day on all fixed routes service, excluding Dial-A-Ride. Transit Manager Monty Cox hopes the event persuaded non-regular riders to use city bus services, especially at a time of rising gas prices.

CALENDAR PROMOTES COMMUNITY EVENTS FOR FREE: Looking for a way to get more interest in your events? Check out <http://www.visaliainc.com>. This FREE Community Events Calendar is linked to the City of Visalia website and the Visalia Convention & Visitors Bureau website. It's very easy to use and is an essential tool for promoting local events. This calendar also has options for a RSS feed, reminders, a way to download directly to your calendar, and many more features! If you would like to add events, use the RSS feed and reminders options, you can to sign up with only a username and password. You can also add pictures to your events for more visibility. When you add an event, you will be asked to pick 1 to 3 event types. Be sure to attach websites, flyers, photos - the more information, the better. Your event will not automatically appear, but will go through a moderator to be sure it is appropriate for this venue. Approval is usually received in less then 24 hours. For any questions, read the FAQ and the event guidelines, or e-mail Erin Capuchino at the Visalia Convention & Visitors Bureau at ERIN@VISITVISALIA.ORG.

CITY ADDS BUSES, ROUTES: City Council members approved the addition of two new bus routes and the addition of more buses to the Mooney Boulevard route at Monday's regular meeting. Staff recommended and Council members approved five proposed bus route changes, three of which

would begin in August 2008, and two are proposed for 2009. Beginning in August, 2008, the Transit Division is proposing the following: Adding one bus in order to maintain the 20-minute schedule during the 16-month CalTrans construction project along Mooney Boulevard, with no schedule changes for this route; offering temporary Express Service between Tulare and Visalia via Highways 99 and 198, with one stop at College of the Sequoias during the 16-month Mooney Boulevard construction to both alleviate traffic congestion and to evaluate the potential for a permanent express route between Visalia and Tulare; and offering a new route from Farmersville and Exeter to Visalia from Visalia Road to Caldwell and Cameron Avenues ending at Mooney Boulevard. This new route will connect with existing Visalia City Coach routes 1 and 2 at Mooney and Orchard Street. Beginning in August, 2009, the Transit Division is proposing: Expansion of both the North Central Visalia Route 7 and North East Visalia Route 8 to meet the needs of new residential and commercial development and offer bi-directional routes rather than the current one-way loops. Exact route expansions will be determined in the coming months with additional rider input. For more information, go to the Transit Division page on the city's website at www.ci.visalia.ca.us.

TIP-A-COP EVENT HELPS SPECIAL OLYMPICS: Members of the Visalia Police Department join other law enforcement agencies for Tip-A-Cop, an annual fund-raising event organized by the Law Enforcement Torch Run and Special Olympics of Northern California. The event will be held from 6 to 9 p.m. Thursday, July 17, at Applebee's Restaurant at Mineral King Avenue and Akers Road. Officers will be paired with restaurant servers, assisting them in their duties, and receive donations for the Special Olympics. The Law Enforcement Torch Run is the only activity where local law enforcement officers join together at the same time to show their support of Special Olympics.

UC VERDE PUTS THE PLUG IN WATER WASTING LAWNS: One plug of UC

Verde grass can mean huge reduction in water usage—about 1 million gallons per acre. The City of Visalia is implementing UC Verde at several municipal locations throughout the City. The turf will be evaluated as an alternative to fescue for use by the City in future commercial and residential development projects. The first of these demonstration projects is at the former Caltrans yard at Burke Street & Goshen Avenue. The UC Verde, available only as accelerated grass plugs, was installed during the week of July 7th -11th. This UC Verde pilot project is part of the development of a citywide landscaping ordinance which staff is pursuing with City Council support. It is



hoped that residences and businesses will want to follow this pilot with the installation of a lush lawn with significant water savings. The University of California released this remarkable grass in 2003. UC Verde produces a dense turf of soft, bright-green, very fine leaf blades, and will grow to a maximum height of 4 to 8 inches in most locations. With a root system extending several feet into the ground, watering is not needed in most parts of the country, which will see a substantial reduction in water usage. In gallons, this means about 1 million gallons of water per acre can be saved by using UC Verde. For more information on UC Verde, contact Dan Vena or Kay Hutmacher at Sierra Design at (559) 733-3690.

VISALIA ONE OF FASTEST GROWING CITY IN U.S.: Visalia is one of the nation's fastest-growing cities, according to the latest population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau. Visalia's population on July 1, 2007, was just below 119,000, an increase of almost 4% from the year before, according to data released today. That made Visalia the 18th fastest-growing city among 262 cities in the U.S. with more than 100,000 residents, the bureau estimates. Four other California cities

were in the top 20 for growth: Victorville, Irvine, Moreno Valley and Bakersfield. Fresno growth was 79th, going up 1.4% to 470,508 residents.



PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS: The following new Public Works/Development Projects are being conducted during the week of July 14. For more information on Public Works projects, call the Public Works Customer Service Line at 713-4428.

1. Install street improvements and water service on Jacob Street south of Myrtle Ave. Days and hours of work being done: Monday – Friday 8:30am – 4 pm. Date of expected completion: August 15, 2008. Why work is being done: Improve residential street to south property line. Responsible Contractor/Contact: COV, Rebecca Keenan 713-4541.
2. **Road Closure – significant traffic impact.** Install street improvements on Camp Drive south of Goshen Avenue. Days and hours of work being done: 24/7. Date of expected completion: August 22, 2008. Why work is being done: Widen and improve street for industrial park development. Responsible Contractor/Contact: American Incorporated, 681-1776.
3. Replace underground electric service along Redwood Avenue between Beech and Coppola Streets. Days and hours of work being done: Monday thru Friday 8:30am – 4 pm. Date of expected completion: July 17, 2008. Why work is being done: Replace existing blown conduits in the street. Responsible Contractor/Contact: Irish Construction, 661-816-5504.
4. Install water service across Demaree Street south of Caldwell Avenue. Days and hours of work being done: Monday thru Friday 8:30am – 4 pm. Date of expected completion: August 15, 2008. Why work is being done: New Longs Drug store on southeast corner of Demaree Street and Caldwell Avenue. Responsible Contractor/Contact: West Valley Construction, 732-7447.
5. Widen streets, underground utilities and signal work at Riggin and Dinuba Boulevard. (**significant traffic impacts ongoing at various times**). Days and hours of work being done: Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Date of expected completion: December 20, 2008. Why work is being done: New Orchard Walk commercial shopping center. Responsible Contractor/Contact: Tolladay Construction Inc, 431-4111, Ext 12.

