



Volume 24

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PROPOSED ANIMAL SHELTER SITES DRAWS MIXED REVIEWS: Contrary to a news report, Council Members praised a Needs Assessment, Feasibility and Building Program Study conducted by Shelter Planners of America. The report, which cost the city \$21,000, and was completed in March, was authorized by the City of Visalia and Valley Oak SPCA. The study recommended a new shelter of about 25,000 square feet with a center courtyard design. The present shelter is about 17,250 square feet and was built in the 1930's, with additions in the 1950's and 2002. The present adoption rate of 20% is in the moderate range, and the return to owner rate of 7% is below national averages. The study cited the importance of visibility and accessibility, saying it is widely recognized that locating shelters in high-visibility locations increases visitors and the number of pets adopted and returned to owners, reduces the need for animal euthanasia, and helps build public awareness. The study also stated the importance of a central location to the area it serves, with easy access from the adjacent roadway. The discussion of alternate sites for the new facility brought mixed reviews from Council members and no consensus on an optimum site. The nine proposed sites included five city-owned sites near the Visalia Municipal Airport, and four sites owned by the city which meet the zoning requirements of 500 feet separating the facility from residentially zoned lands. Council members agreed more discussion was needed on a viable site with staff members and the Animal Control Facility Committee.

COUNCIL OPPOSES PASSAGE OF BUDGET BY BORROWING LOCAL REVENUES: In a letter to the Governor and Assembly and Senate leadership dated July 25, the Visalia City Council conveyed strong opposition to the state taking local government redevelopment or transportation revenues to fund the state budget, saying such a move “ would not only have negative consequences for our cities and their residents, but it is a disastrous fiscal policy for the state. “ The letter cited the voters passage of Proposition 1A in 2004 with 84% of the vote as a show of support that local government should not continue to serve as a source of funding to meet the state's financial obligations. In addition, voters approved by a 77% margin in 2006 to protect Prop. 42 revenues for their intended purpose—critical transportation and infrastructure improvements. Mayor Gamboa said he would support a budget compromise that is balanced and makes progress toward long-term budget reform. “Borrowing or taking these funds to pay state operating costs is simply bad fiscal policy. It compounds the state's structural budget deficit and undercuts both voter and investor confidence in our economy.”

TULARE-VISALIA TRANSIT ROUTE KICK-OFF SET FOR AUG. 8: Join the celebration for the start of the Tulare/Visalia Transit Route at 10 a.m. Friday, Aug. 8, in front of College of the Sequoias. The Transit Division is offering temporary Express Service between Tulare and Visalia via Highways 99 and 198, with one stop at COS, during the 16-month CalTrans construction project along Mooney Boulevard to both alleviate traffic congestion and to evaluate the potential for a permanent express route between Visalia and Tulare. Transit also will add another bus to maintain the 20-minute schedule during the 16-month CalTrans construction project along Mooney Boulevard, with no schedule changes for this route. For more information on bus schedules, visit the City's website at www.ci.visalia.ca.us.



VISALIA TO HOST DAY 6 STAGE START FOR TOUR OF CALIFORNIA:

Downtown Visalia will be the site of the Stage Start for Day 6, Feb. 19, of the *Amgen Tour of California*. The record-setting professional cycling road race will be expanded to include stops in 16 host cities over the course of nine days from February 14-22. Already considered cycling's most important and successful road race in the United States, the event's fourth running will be expanded to cover more than 800 miles over the nine days. Traveling almost the entire length of California, the race will begin in the state's capital, Sacramento, and end in San Diego County with a finish in Escondido on February 22. The 16 official stage start and finish cities that have been selected for the 2009 race include, in addition to Visalia, seven new locales – Davis, Santa Cruz, Merced, Clovis, Paso Robles, Rancho Bernardo and Escondido – that will join Sacramento, Santa Rosa, Sausalito, San Jose, Modesto, Solvang, Santa Clarita and Pasadena as host cities along the

route. "Visalia has made a major commitment to sporting and outdoor recreation with the city's investment in regional facilities, our professional baseball stadium, and enhancements to our convention center to make it one of the best sporting event venues in the region," said Mayor Jesus Gamboa. He joined Clovis Mayor Bob Whalen, Visalia's Local Organizing Committee's Technical Director Mike Camarena, Committee Chair Greg Kirkpatrick and members Glenn Morris, Joe Kuhn, Erin Capuchino, and Nancy Loliva, and nine members of the Southern Sierra Cycling Team at a joint press conference on July 23 in Clovis to announce the selection of Visalia and Clovis as two new host cities. For over two decades, Visalia has hosted the Sequoia Cycling Classic, a National Race Calendar listed event. Southern Sierra Cyclists, coordinators of the race, will be a key partner in hosting the Amgen Tour of California in Visalia. "Their past experience in producing local events, state championships, National Race Calendar events and National Championship events ensures that the Visalia Stage Start will be produced to the highest professional standards," said Mayor Gamboa. For further information on the 2009 *Amgen Tour of California*, please visit www.amgentourofcalifornia.com.

CITY STEPS UP WITH JOBS FOR YOUTH: Due to the favorable response by the business community to the Step Up Job Training Program, the City will be given seven youth for placement in its organization with an additional two participants to be placed in the PAL Program. City staff met with Joshua Huerta and Juan Guerrero of Proteus, Inc., which is overseeing the program with \$37,000 in funds. Currently, 20 youth are working in a variety of organizations in the community, and funding allows for an additional 17 at-risk youth to participate. All those selected to participate in this program will be screened by various youth center counselors who will then determine the best fit for the youth and the training site. It is the city's goal to begin placing youth by Aug. 1. Individuals selected can work up to a maximum of 15 hours a week. Once school begins, schedules will be adjusted to accommodate individual school schedules.

ARE YOU 'IN THE KNOW'?: The Visalia City Council has 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. 5, 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.

SPECIAL ENFORCEMENT BUREAU REPORTS DECREASE IN GANG-RELATED CRIMES:

Formed in August, 2007 by combining the Gang and Narcotics units of the Visalia Police Department, the Special Enforcement Bureau recently released statistics specific to gang violence for January-June, 2008. Compared to the same time period in 2007, assault with a deadly weapon were down 28 percent, from 39 to 28, and drive-by shootings were down by 38%, from 55 to 34. The Bureau also reported the total number of gang arrests were up 47%, from 221 to 324.

VISALIA INVESTIGATOR RECEIVES AWARD: Sarah Wray has been awarded the Law Enforcement Investigator of the Year Award for 2007-08. She has been a member for five years of the California Financial Crimes Investigator's Association (CFCIA), an association composed of investigators from various private companies, financial institutions, and law enforcement agencies which investigate and prosecute financial crimes. For the last 4 years, Sarah has held the position of Law Enforcement Trustee for the Mid-State Division and is also a member of the State Board. In April 2008, she was re-elected to continue holding the same position for another two-year term. During 2007 and into 2008, Sarah worked a case involving multiple suspects that bilked businesses in Visalia and Tulare County out of over \$40,000, \$10,000 of that being taken in a 3 week period while the suspects were out on bail from an earlier arrest. All of the suspects were arrested and charged with burglary, identity theft, possession of stolen property, and passing worthless checks. Two of the suspects were sent to state prison while the third was sent to county jail, remanded to a 6 month drug rehab program and ordered to pay \$20,000 restitution.

AIR SERVICE FROM VISALIA TO ONTARIO BEGINS SEPT. 8: Great Lakes Aviation, Ltd. will begin serving Visalia, California with daily flights to Ontario International Airport on Sept. 8. Ontario currently has the following airlines providing service: Alaska Airlines; American; Continental; Delta; Southwest; United; and US Airways. The Visalia flight schedule is:

- Visalia to Ontario: Flight 5045, departs 6:47a.m., arrives 7:32 a.m., operates daily; and Flight 5064, departs 2:04p.m., arrives 2:49p.m., operates daily.
- Ontario to Visalia: Flight 5065, departs 11:30a.m., arrives 12:15 p.m., operates daily; and Flight 5061, departs 5:45p.m., arrives 6:30p.m., and operates daily.

To purchase tickets on Great Lakes Airlines, visit www.flygreatlakes.com, call the Great Lakes' reservation center at 800-554-5111 or through your travel agent.

BEAR HUGS: Troy Korsgaden, a local Farmer's Insurance Agent, delivered about 150 teddy bears to the Visalia Police Department. These bears, dressed in a police uniform, are part of Farmer's Insurance's nationwide program which began five years ago. Local agents obtain the bears and provide them to local law enforcement agencies. Korsgaden said he and Sharon Jansma decided to get involved with this project because they wanted to give back to the community and help children who may become involved in less than desirable circumstances. He hopes the teddy bears will help relieve some of the fears and anxieties young children experience during such times. Korsgaden said he wants to have this be an on-going project and plans more donations in the future. Assistant Chief Colleen Mestas said, "On behalf of the Visalia Police Department, we wish to thank Farmer's Insurance for the generous donation. These bears provide a calming factor for children during various stressful situations we encounter in Law Enforcement."