

Inside City Hall

Beyond the headlines

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AIR SERVICE FROM VISALIA TO ONTARIO BEGINS SEPT. 8: Great Lakes Aviation officials and Visalia leaders are eager for flights to begin between Visalia and Ontario International Airport. In a presentation Monday to the Visalia City Council, Great Lakes Chief Executive Chuck Howell and marketing director Monica Taylor outlined the airline's plans to begin flights Sept. 8. Two round trips will be offered daily to the Southern California airport. Visalia has been without passenger airline service since late May, when Air Midwest ceased service in both Visalia and Merced as part of a nationwide shutdown of its operations. Nonstop departures from Visalia for the 45-minute flight to Ontario leave at 6:47 a.m. and 2:04 p.m. Return flights are scheduled to arrive in Visalia at 12:15 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Great Lakes will fly 19-seat Beech 1900D twin-turboprop airplanes. Service could expand in the future, Howell said, with the addition of flights to Las Vegas or using larger 30-seat airplanes that provide a restroom and a flight attendant. To purchase tickets on Great Lakes Airlines, visit www.flygreatlakes.com, call the Great Lakes' reservation center at 800-554-5111 or go through your travel agent.

TEEN IDOL: Alyssa Almaguer, whose soulful voice was compared to that of Norah Jones, bested nine other hopefuls August 9th for the title of 2008 Teen Idol. Alyssa, also the two-time winner of The Next Big Thing competition, has been playing guitar since age 6. She will be a freshman at Mt. Whitney High School, loves to perform, and is involved in her school choir and drama team. The competition was hosted by the Visalia Parks & Recreation Department.



‘CITIZENS IN THE KNOW’ APPLICATIONS DUE SEPT. 5: 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.

COUNCIL ADOPTS CULTURAL ARTS PLAN: A year in the making, the City Council on Aug. 18 approved a Cultural Arts Plan designed to take a comprehensive approach in promoting the arts. Community input drove the development of the plan, with over 500 citizens participating in public intercept surveys, town meetings and public forums and interviews with leadership and arts/cultural organizations. Market analysis based on specific spending, participation and other habits was

also conducted. Based on the survey data, lack of time and information were the top two reasons people gave for not participating in more cultural events. Responses were evenly split between arts/crafts fairs and festivals, stage plays and musical theater as events they would like to attend. Council also approved the implementation of strategies, including: Adding cultural programming in future recreational offerings; provide administrative support to the Arts Consortium; provide up to \$15,000 annually in grant funding for the arts and a review of the guidelines by the Arts Consortium; consider guidelines for co-promoting events to enable new types of events, and/or new promoters to provide new, diverse cultural offerings in the community; explore the feasibility of a central, Internet-based ticketing operation to improve access to events; review the City's Special Events application process to streamline the process; and further develop the Visalia Convention and Visitors Bureau's community events calendar to promote events.

PARKS AND RECREATION FOUNDATION

SEEKS PRESIDENT/CEO: The Board of Directors of the Visalia Parks and Recreation Foundation is currently accepting applications from qualified individuals for the position of President/CEO of the Foundation. This position is a part-time, independent contractor position, and will be responsible for all the day-to-day activities of the Foundation. Applications should be directed to Alex Peltzer, Chair of the Board of Directors, Visalia Parks and Recreation Foundation, P.O. Box 1032, Visalia, CA 93279. An application, consisting of a letter of interest describing the candidate's qualifications for the position, and a complete curriculum vitae or resume, must be received by the Foundation no later than Friday, Sept. 19. For more information, call 713-4599.



SAVE THE DATE FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING SYMPOSIUM: The City of Visalia, in partnership with its local affordable housing partners and service agencies will host a free Affordable Homes Fair from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, Oct. 4, at the Visalia Convention Center, 303 E. Acequia Ave. The City is presenting this event in partnership with C-SET, Self-Help Enterprises, Habitat for Humanity, Proteus, Tulare County Housing Authority, Christian Church Homes, Center for Independent Living, and the Social Security Administration. Services offered at this event include: Affordable Homeownership; Section 8 Rental Housing; Rehabilitation of Your Home; Foreclosure Counseling; Energy-Efficiency Services; and Rehabilitation Grants for Mobile Homes. Food and refreshments will be provided. For more information, call 713-4460.

STATE BUDGET UPDATE—IS THIS THE MAKE-OR-BREAK WEEK?:

Capitol factions remain far apart on fully closing the \$15.2 billion budget deficit. The remaining gap is about \$6 billion, which could be covered by a temporary one-cent sales tax hike which Governor Schwarzenegger support, borrowing against lottery profits, and through loans from transportation funds and local governments which has been met with stiff opposition by the Visalia City Council and the League of California Cities, to name a few. In a presentation at the Aug. 18 City Council meeting, Administrative Service Director Eric Frost discussed the impact of the state budget crisis on Visalia. The City's budget, adopted in June, required the City to make difficult budget decisions, including postponing projects, cutting back programs, and freezing positions. The budget grapples with lower revenues due to economic realities and anticipated revenue losses from the State. The Council took further action in order to keep their fiscal house in order, including assuming potential state revenue losses totaling \$1.15 million. While City management believes this level of revenue loss is very likely, the concern is that unless the State acts responsibly, the revenue losses to Visalia may rise dramatically. Areas identified as additional potential cuts to Visalia are namely borrowing an estimated \$2 million in Proposition 1A Property Tax, suspending \$1.08 million from Proposition 42, and a 5% , or \$400,000, takeaway from funding from the Redevelopment Project areas - an additional \$3.12 million in lost revenues.

City Council members have written letters, issued resolutions, and personally contacted legislative representatives as well as the Governor and leadership in both the Senate and the Assembly, conveying the devastating impact any “borrowing” of local revenues would have on city services. The Council encouraged elected officials to deal with the budget in a straightforward fashion, look for long-term solutions, consider all legitimate revenue and expenditure options, implement good business practices which lead to lower governmental costs, and avoid borrowing. Their message: Creating a budget which delivers essential governmental services timely and effectively is the right thing to do for all Californians.

EXPLORERS REAP REWARDS AT STATE ACADEMY: Ten members of the Visalia Police Department’s Explorer Unit participated in the annual California Police Explorer Academy which was held at the University of California San Diego campus from Saturday August 2nd through Saturday August 9th, 2008. A total of 246 Explorers from throughout California participated in the academy which had three levels of teaching; Basic, Intermediate and Advanced academy levels. In all three levels, the Explorers were given classroom instruction on the principals of law enforcement and had a hands on, learning by doing approach. In addition to lectures, video and other teaching methods used, there was an emphasis on teamwork and leadership. In the Intermediate and Advanced levels, the Explorers put their classroom learning to use in police academy- type exercises (handcuffing/searching techniques, car stops, and unarmed self-defense). The typical day started at 6am and lasted until 10pm. In addition to classroom training, the Explorers participated in daily physical conditioning training. The following Explorers from the Visalia Police Department participated in the academy; Bradley and Sarah Griffith, Melanie Ruiz, Tyler Van Der Schuur, Alan Pujol, Ashley Rincon, Dalton Miller, Danny Gonzales Gabriel Correia and Raymundo Medina. Bradley Griffith received the #1 Explorer honor for the Advanced Academy Course in addition to receiving the fastest time for all Explorers in the obstacle course. Sarah Griffith, his sister received the #1 Explorer honor for the Intermediate Academy Course and was the top overall female Explorer for the entire academy. Tyler Van Der Schuur received an award for running the fastest mile with a time of 4:57 minutes. The Chief of Police Bob Carden would like to commend all the Explorers for a job well done.

*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*