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GREAT LAKES TREKS TO ONTARIO BOOST AIR PASSENGER

COUNTS: A total of 553 passengers flew on Great Lakes from Visalia to Ontario in October, surpassing the first month figures of the city's last carrier, U.S. Airways, by 40 passengers. Under contract with the Department of Transportation, Great Lakes Airlines provides the essential air service for Visalia, operating the pressurized 19-passenger Beechcraft 1900 aircraft to and from Ontario International Airport. Afternoon flights are proving very popular mid-week, with several flights selling out. The airport has made improvements to accommodate the increased passenger load. The size of the secure screening area at the airport terminal was increased so that all passengers can be pre-screened prior to the arrival of the flights and facilitate a faster boarding of full flights to keep the carrier on schedule. Ontario International Airport has non-stop flights to up to 30 cities a day, providing one-stop service from Visalia to locations in the U.S. and Mexico.

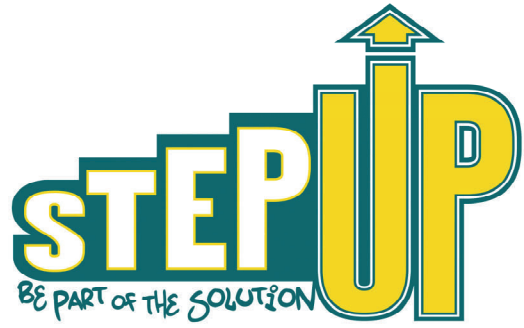
COUNCIL APPROVES RETIREE HEALTH CARE RATE INCREASE: In a 4-1 decision, with Mayor Jesus Gamboa dissenting, the Visalia City Council approved a health care rate increase for retirees of about \$38 a month. On Jan. 1, retirees under age 65 will pay \$218.38 a month for PPO or EPO coverage, up from \$180.45 in 2008. Those over 65 will pay \$182.64, up from \$144.71. In addition, a new high deductible PPO plan is being offered for 2009, at a cost of \$38.07 a month for those over 65. The City's contribution varies depending upon age but averages about \$800 a month for each retiree's medical and vision insurance. Other cities, such as Tulare and Porterville, as well as the County of Tulare, pay nothing to retirees for medical insurance. Insurance premiums currently account for \$2.6 million annually in the City's General Fund.

CITY'S BUDGET SNAGS 'DISTINGUISHED' HONOR: For the second time in as many biannual budgets, the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) gave the City of Visalia the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for its budget. The award reflects the commitment of the governing body and staff in meeting the highest principles of governmental budgeting. Budget documents must be rated "proficient" in how well they serve as a policy document, a financial plan, an operations guide, and a communications device. The award was presented to Finance Managers Renee Nagel and Melody Murch.

MAYOR'S RACE KICKS OFF CANDY CANE LANE PARADE: City Council Members Greg Collins, Amy Shuklian and Vice Mayor Bob Link team with Mayor Jesus Gamboa for the "Mayor's Bicycle Race" at 6 p.m. Monday, Dec. 1, just prior to the annual Candy Cane Lane Parade. The "Race" also promotes the Amgen Tour of California Cycling Race, which includes Visalia as the Start for Stage 6 on Feb. 19. The Mayor's Race will start at Bridge and Main Street, and feature a team of four City and county members who will ride in a bicycle relay for about six blocks apiece, from Bridge to Locust Street and back again. Prizes will be given to the winning teams, and the most creative team shirt.

STEP UP YOUTH SUMMIT DRAWS 1,000

STUDENTS: A world renowned motivational speaker and a theatrical troupe from San Diego will be used to help steer 1,000 Tulare County high school students away from the temptation of negative influences. The youth summit, scheduled to be held Nov. 20 at the Visalia Convention Center, features Jeff Yalden, a renowned motivational speaker best known for his role as an MTV Made coach, who will give his keynote speech at 9 a.m. to kick off the youth summit. Visalia Police Department Officer Rich Johnson said Jeff Yalden has a knack for connecting to audiences, particularly youth. "Jeff is not your basic, dry, presenter," said Officer Johnson, who attended a Yalden performance in New Orleans. "Jeff has been through hard times and he can relate to what these students are going through. He really hits home on life lessons." Concluding the event, Victory Outreach Church Ministries will perform "Street Dreams," a theatrical performance that brings a message of hope. Visalia Police Lt. Perry Phipps is co-chair of this event, which also offers breakout sessions geared toward youth and a resource fair. The purpose of the youth summit is to connect, educate, equip, and inspire Tulare County young people to live violence- and drug-free lifestyles, pursue educational achievement and connect to their community in a positive manner.



SPONSORS, VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR INTERNATIONAL CY-

CLING RACE: Visalia City Council approved a request for a \$10,000 Gold sponsorship for the upcoming Amgen Tour of California Cycling Race. Seven-time Tour de France winner and cancer survivor Lance Armstrong has confirmed that he will join more than 140 of the world's top cyclists at the Start Line for Stage Six of the Amgen Tour of California Feb. 19, in Downtown Visalia. After taking a parade lap or two around downtown, the riders will roll out of town headed for Paso Robles on the longest stage of the nine-day road race. The Local Organizing Committee is working to prepare the streets of Visalia to accommodate more than 1,000 riders, support personnel, and race staff and 5,000 to 8,000 spectators on race day. Several ancillary events to promote bicycle safety and cancer awareness in association with the ATOC Sponsors. The Jeff Barnes Brain Injury Foundation will receive a portion of the proceeds from local race sponsorships. Help is needed from the entire community in three areas: Financial support, race-day volunteers, and public participation on race day and at ancillary events. To meet the commitments as a host city and the target donation to the Jeff Barnes Brain Injury Foundation requires raising \$60,000 to \$80,000. The Local Organizing Committee (LOC) has developed a variety of sponsorship opportunities for businesses and individuals. Those interested in sponsoring the race can contact Sponsorship Coordinator Linda Klein at 300-9413. More than 300 volunteers will be needed the morning of the race to act as course marshals, direct traffic and parking, and provide staff support. Anyone who is interested in volunteering must register on the ATOC Web site:

www.amgentourofcalifornia.com.

‘CLICK IT’ FOR A SAFE THANKSGIVING: The Visalia Police Department, in an effort to help bring everyone safely home for the holidays, will be aggressively enforcing the state's seat belt and child safety seat laws during a *Click It or Ticket* mobilization through Nov. 30. The campaign relies on heavy enforcement and public education as a means to help reduce deaths and injuries on California's roadways. California currently has a seat belt use rate at 95.7 percent. "The *Click It or Ticket* campaign has shown that Californians have gotten the message that seat belts work," said Police Chief Bob Carden. "But hundreds still are dying every year because they didn't buckle up. Our officers will not be giving warnings. It really is *Click It or Ticket*." California has a primary seat belt law which requires that every passenger in the car, including the driver, is required to wear a seat belt at all times. If stopped and found to be in violation, law enforcement will issue citations without warning. Tickets for first seat belt violations are \$128 for occupants 16 years and older and \$450 for children under age 16.

‘BATTLE OF THE BADGES’ NETS 273 PINTS OF BLOOD: Thank Visalia Fire Chief Mark Nelson if Police Chief Bob Carden’s car shines a little brighter. A total of 273 pints of blood was collected during the week long “Battle of the Badges” blood drive. A friendly wager between the two Chiefs helped spur donations, with the winner getting a free car wash. Visalia Police collected 147 donations, with Visalia Fire almost doubling last year’s donations with 126. In addition to blood donations taken at the Central California Blood Center in Visalia, two blood mobiles were set up at City Hall West and City Hall East. The need for blood rises dramatically during the holiday season—and as many as three lives can be saved with each pint of blood. Congratulations to all who donated—heroes one and all.

*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*