

# Inside City Hall

Beyond the headlines

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## AMGEN TOUR OF CALIFORNIA

### Get a Glance of Lance!

In its fourth year, the Amgen Tour of California, now considered the biggest cycling road race in the U.S., comes to Visalia. The Tour starts Feb. 14 with a Prologue race in Sacramento and ends nine days and 750 miles later in Escondido.

Stage 5 will start at 10 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 19, in downtown Visalia and end 134.3 miles later in Paso Robles.

“Picture the Pro Bowl and the Super Bowl coming to your city street at the same time—that’s how big this is for Visalia,” said Mike Camarena, technical director for Visalia’s Local Organizing Committee.

### Best Viewing Locations

**1 – The Heart of the Start** - In the heart of Downtown Visalia, the official start is located at Church Street and Acequia Avenue. This is also where the stage for the rider’s official sign-in is located. Visitors and spectators will enjoy the opportunity to experience “autograph alley” in the rider sign-in area.

**2 – Team Talk** - The team areas will be located just south of the intersection of Acequia Avenue and Bridge Street (just east of the sign-in stage near the Convention Center) in the City parking lots. This is a must-visit locale as the team mechanics will be busy preparing the riders’ machines for the long day’s journey to Paso Robles. Riders may also be available for autographs here as well.

**3 – Best Lap** - There will be a parade lap of the Main Street area that encompasses the following streets; Acequia, Bridge, Main, Court, Center and Floral. Any corner in this entire parade area offers the opportunity to see the world class field of professional cyclists (a hint: the corner of Court and Main offers a dual direction opportunity!).

**4 – Main Street USA** - Main Street is also the route for the entire peloton and race caravan to begin to traverse Visalia for the exit to the actual start of the day’s race.

**5 – Get Outta town:** The exit route will take the race caravan through the following residential and commercial streets; Main, Conyer, Tulare and Akers. Once at Akers and Whitendale, the race is on!



### Race Specs

**When:** Stage 5 of the Amgen Tour of California starts at 10 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 19, in downtown Visalia.

**Neutral zone:** Stage 5 begins on Acequia Avenue and make a 1-1/2 mile loop through downtown Visalia. The start of Stage 5 includes a parade for the cyclists, giving fans a chance to see what they do best. Cyclists will hit Bridge, Main and Court Street, Center Avenue and Floral Street.

**To learn more:** Go to [www.amgentourofcalifornia.com](http://www.amgentourofcalifornia.com).

*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](http://www.ci.visalia.ca.us), email [nloliva@ci.visalia.ca.us](mailto:nloliva@ci.visalia.ca.us) or call 713-4535*

**ACEQUIA AVENUE CONVERSION ACOMPLISHED:** The one-way to two-way conversion of Acequia Avenue occurred Sunday, Feb. 8. With the cooperation and assistance of several entities, including City of Visalia staff, the City of Visalia Police Department, Caltrans, Cruco Construction, Gary Brown Electric, Safety Striping, and McCain, the striping, signage and signal equipment needed for the conversion was installed over the weekend. This conversion is a major change to downtown traffic flow, and City engineering staff will be observing signal coordination, traffic flow, on-street parking and traffic turning movements to “fine tune” traffic operations along the corridor. The signal coordination will take a few weeks to fine tune because of the Cal Trans signal adjustments needed for the extra protected left turn phases that now occur at the State Highway 63 signals. Once the State’s adjustments are made, the city signals will be coordinated for the revised signal timing to provide coordination of signals along Acequia Avenue. In addition, miscellaneous work to complete and finalize the Project will continue through the next few weeks. Some items that are still pending include removal of sign poles, installation of all the emergency vehicle preemption devices, and some additional work within the Caltrans right-of-way. These miscellaneous items were non-essential for the conversion, and will be completed over the next few weeks. Southern California Edison will be working around the Downtown Visalia area, including along Acequia Avenue, throughout the next few months, on an unrelated project. More information on the SCE project can be obtained from the City of Visalia and SCE websites. If there are any areas of concern along Acequia identified, please email Adam Ennis at [aennis@ci.visalia.ca.us](mailto:aennis@ci.visalia.ca.us) or Rebecca Keenan at [rkeenana@ci.visalia.ca.us](mailto:rkeenana@ci.visalia.ca.us). The City would like to acknowledge and thank the following individuals for their assistance with this Project: City Staff—Chris Young, Assistant Community Development Director; Adam Ennis, Engineering Services Manager; Rebecca Keenan, Project Manager; Ed Juarez, Senior Public Works Inspector; Eric Bons, Norm Goldstrom and Myron Rounsfull, Traffic Safety and Encroachment Permits; Paul Scheibel, Planning; Sarah Pescatore and Sal Uribe, Drafting; Steve Dicken, and Stephen Price, Survey; Abel Lopez and Jose Herrera, Traffic Safety; Nancy Loliva, Community Relations Manager, and Officers James Andrews and Jon Pree, City of Visalia Police Department; and Public Participation—CalTrans; Downtown Visalians; Visalia Property Based Improvement District (PBID); Kaweah Delta Medical Center; Bicycle, Pedestrian, Waterways Trails Committee; Valley Voice Newspaper; Visalia Times Delta; and Channel 30 Action News.

**BIKE RACKS EXPANDS BY 14:** It’s getting easier for bicyclists to park in downtown Visalia. Five bicycle racks have been installed at the Fox Theater, seven at the Bank of America at 212 E. Main St., with room for bike trailers, and two at Provost & Pritchard, a local engineering firm, at 130 N. Garden St. The installation of bicycle racks will provide more bike parking to meet the expanded use of bicycles in the downtown area. The expanded use stems from the addition of bike lanes along the conversion of Acequia Avenue, the roll-out of the city’s Vi-Cycle program, and interest on the part of downtown business owners to have bike racks installed at their businesses. The City’s Bicycle, Pedestrian and Waterway Trails Committee worked with local manufacturer, Iron Works, to design a custom rack for the downtown area that provides both a safer rack and a positive contribution to the downtown streetscape. The bike racks at the Bank of America were designed with enough length to accommodate bike trailers for families towing children or those visiting the downtown Farmers’ Market on Thursday evenings. The Committee collaborated with the City Engineering Department., PBID and the Downtown Visalians on this project. Businesses interested in having bike racks installed can contact the Public Works Department at 713-4428.

**WINTER TOTALS FOR DUMP ON US:** A total of 364 vehicles and 24 trailers participated at the Jan. 24 Dump on Us event. A total of 103.74 tons from 15 loads was collected—and the recyclable rate was a whopping 80.79 percent. The next Dump On Us event will be held from 7 to 11 a.m. Saturday, April 18, at the City of Visalia Corporation yard, at 335 N. Cain St. For information on programs, recycling and holiday schedules, call 713-4500 or visit the city’s website at [www.ci.visalia.ca.us](http://www.ci.visalia.ca.us).

## **CITY LEADERS DISCUSS STIMULUS, APPROPRIATION PROJECTS WITH FEDERAL LEGISLATORS:**

Visalia Mayor Jesus Gamboa, Vice Mayor Bob Link and Assistant City Manager Michael Olmos traveled to Washington, D.C., as part of the "One Voice" delegation organized through the Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG). Their visit included meetings with U.S. Rep. Devin Nunes and his legislative director Damon Nelson, U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein, legislative director, Ryan Hunt, and appropriations staff Will Dyer, U.S. Rep. Jim Costa, Sen. Barbara Boxer's appropriations staff members Danielle Leone and Bridgett Petruszok, and Dennis Devaney, Essential Air Service Chief for the FAA Office of Aviation. Discussions with Sen. Feinstein included foreclosure issues and the use of \$2.3 million in Federal Funds allocated to Visalia through the Federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program. She also discussed rising local unemployment rates due to the economic downturn. Federal legislators and their staff were interested in potential "shovel ready" projects for the upcoming Federal Stimulus Program. The primary regional project for potential stimulus funding is the Ben Maddox interchange expansion. In response to recent announcements by Senator Feinstein's and Boxer's offices inviting requests for Federal funding appropriations, potential local appropriations projects were discussed with staff for both senators. The City submitted request forms to Sen. Feinstein on Feb. 5 for the Plaza Drive Interchange, Sequoia Shuttle Visitor Center and Transit Center Expansion, a new Municipal Animal Control Facility and funding for a new Downtown Parking Structure. Requests will be submitted to Sen. Boxer on Feb. 13. Discussions with Devaney included the current status of air service with Great Lakes ridership activity, and that Great Lakes is now the primary essential air service provider in the U.S.

**DESIGN ACCELERATED FOR TRANSIT PROJECTS:** At the Feb. 9 City Council meeting at the Visalia Convention Center, Transit Manager Monty Cox gave an update on the accelerated design process of the expansion of the Transit Center and Bus Operations Facility and the new Sequoia Shuttle Visitor Center. These three projects were accelerated through the design process, per Council direction, in order to make them "construction ready" and eligible for inclusion in the federal economic stimulus funding legislation making its way through Congress. To complete the design phase as expeditiously as possible, architects were chosen who had provided the design of the original facilities. The two expansion projects are on track to meet the federal construction-ready deadline of April 15, and the Shuttle Visitors Center plans are on track to make a June 1 deadline to fall within the second 180-day construction ready deadline being discussed in Congress.

## **CITIZENS IN THE KNOW RETURNS:**

The City's "Citizens in the Know" program returns this Spring. The six-week sessions begin Wednesday, April 15, from 5 to 9 p.m. at the Visalia City Hall, 707 W. Acequia Ave. "Citizens in the Know" features 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 six consecutive Wednesday nights through May 20. An optional city tour and session on organizational management will be offered on May 27. 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](http://www.ci.visalia.ca.us), and are due by Friday, March 13, by FAX at 713-4800 or by mail or hand-delivered at 425 E. Oak St., Suite 301, Visalia, CA 93291. Contact Community Relations Manager Nancy Loliva at 713-4535 or by email at [nloliva@ci.visalia.ca.us](mailto:nloliva@ci.visalia.ca.us) for more information.



**PD'S RECORD DIVISION CHANGES HOURS:** Effective March 9<sup>th</sup>, the Records Division for the Visalia Police Department will change their hours of service to 8 A.M. to 5 P.M. Monday through Friday. The hours of service are for Police Headquarters as well as both District Substations. This change was made due to the lack of demand for service during the previous extended hours of operation from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Information: Call Sergeant Steven Phillips at 713-4216.

**SANTA FE OVERCROSSING GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY:** "A Bridge of the Future" is the theme for the upcoming groundbreaking ceremony for the Santa Fe Overcrossing. The ceremony is set for 10 a.m. Friday, Feb. 20 at the Santa Fe Bridge, north of Highway 198. In the event of rain, the event will be held in the breezeway between the Visalia Convention Center and City Hall East.

**CITY'S BUILDING PERMITS OFF TO SLOW START IN '09:** The total number of building permits issued by the City of Visalia in January, 2009, was 231, 29 percent off last year's number of 324. New commercial additions were up 14 percent, from 29 to 33, with an increase in value of 9%, from \$2,258,033 in 2008 to \$2,450,648 in 2009. A total of 5 permits for 10 multi-family units were issued in January, 2009, compared to 0 the year before.