

Inside City Hall

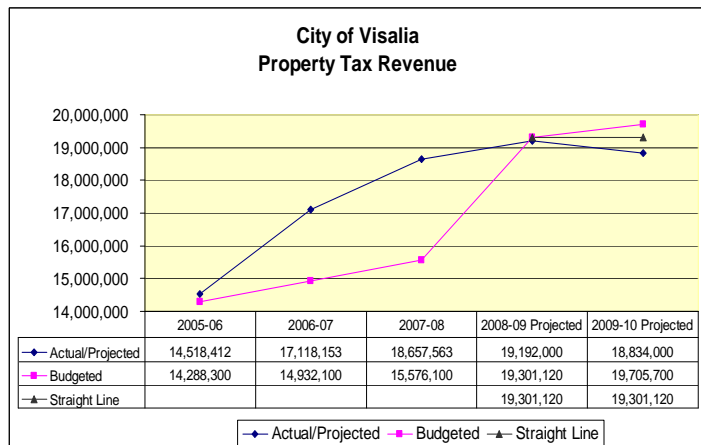
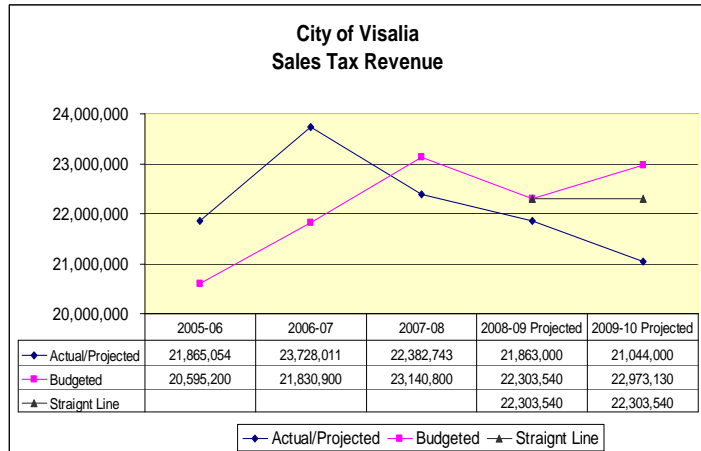
Beyond the headlines

VOLUME 11

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APRIL 6 PUBLIC HEARING TO ADDRESS BUDGET

SHORTFALL: The Visalia City Council will hold a public hearing at its April 6 regular meeting to discuss options to offset a \$4.2 million shortfall in the 2009/2010 budget, of which \$2.8 million is from declining sales tax and property tax revenues. Both revenue sources make up two thirds of the City's General Fund. Administrative Services Director Eric Frost provided an in-depth mid-year financial report at the March 16 meeting. This year's projected shortfall is \$600,000, but the challenge is in what to do next year as the deficit increases. Frost presented a number of recommendations from City management to deal with the budget shortfall. They include: reinstating the General Fund retiree health care contributions of \$500,000 for FY 08/09 and 09/10; retain all frozen projects frozen and freeze the Miki City Park project for an additional savings of \$274,500; postponing projects in the Transportation Impact Fee; consider various fare alternatives to offset the State Transit Assistance monies which will be taken by the State; and consider increasing Solid Waste rates and fees. Council took no action on the management recommendations, and these and other options will be discussed during the April 6 public hearing.



CITY AWARDED \$2.66 MILLION IN STIMULUS FUNDING FOR TRANSIT CENTER, MAINTENANCE FACILITY EXPANSION:

City officials learned that Visalia will receive \$2.66 million in federal stimulus funding which will go toward expansion of the downtown Transit Center and the Transit Maintenance Facility on East Goshen Avenue. The projects will provide an estimated 140 construction jobs and allow the city to add bus routes. Visalia's portion was part of the more than \$1 billion in transit money for California included in the \$787 billion stimulus program passed by Congress last month to create jobs and jump-start the economy. The Transit Center expansion will be done on the former Razzari Ford used car lot at Center Avenue and Bridge Street, which will be converted into three lanes each with four bays for buses to park. The expanded maintenance building will add four service bays to the current five. A second drive-through lane would be added to the bus-washing building.

MOW THOSE WEEDS DOWN BY APRIL 15: That's when the City will begin to fine property owners who haven't mowed down their weeds. "It's a date we all can remember," said Battalion Chief Charlie Norman with the Visalia Fire Department. Rules also apply to weeds, debris, litter, garbage or rubbish on the property, including any building, entranceway, courtyard, vacant lot or open space. For more information, call the Weed Abatement Hotline at 713-4207.

CENSUS DAY IS APRIL 1, 2010: It's a little more than a year away, but the City of Visalia has already begun developing strategies for Census 2010. An accurate census count is vital to the City and its residents. More than \$300 billion per year in federal and state funding is allocated to states and communities based on census data, and an accurate count is essential to a full and fair distribution of funding to the City. Working with Census Bureau Representative Dolores Gallegos, the city's Community Relations Manager Nancy Loliva will chair the Complete Count Committee and will oversee representation from government, education, faith- and community-based organizations, media, and business. City staff representatives from Planning, Parks & Recreation, Code Enforcement and Public Safety will also participate in the work of subcommittees to reach populations where access is an issue. The first meeting is scheduled for April. If you are interested in participating in one of these subcommittees, contact Nancy Loliva at nloliva@ci.visalia.ca.us or at 713-4535.

PASSPORT DAY: On June 1, U.S. citizens must begin presenting a passport book or passport card approved by the U.S. Government to enter the United States from Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean and Bermuda at land borders and sea ports of entry. City Hall West, at 707 E. Acequia Ave., in Visalia, will join other passport service providers in the U.S. for "Passport Day in the U.S." On Saturday, March 28, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., City Hall West will be open to provide our citizens an opportunity to apply for a passport card or passport book. Passport Cards are generally used for travel to Mexico and can not be used for air travel. The fees for Passport Cards and Passports are:

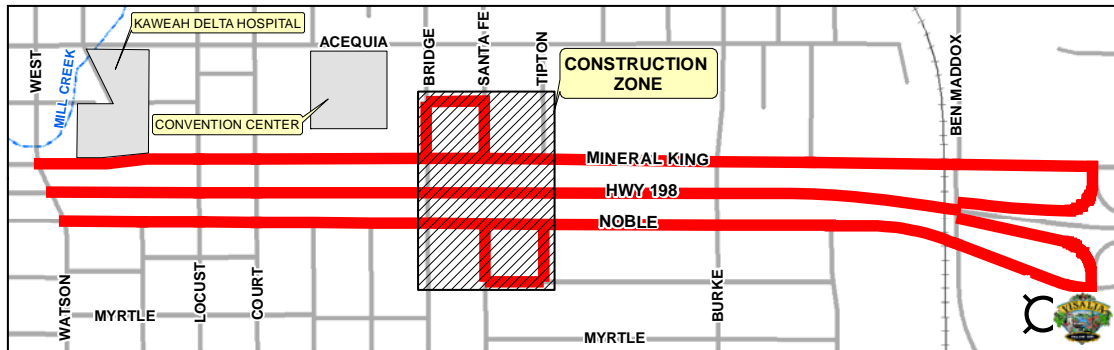
<u>Passport Card:</u>	<u>Passport Card Fee</u>	<u>City Processing Fee*</u>
Under Age 16	\$10	\$25
Age 16 & Over	\$20	\$25
<u>Passports:</u>		
Under Age 16	\$60	\$25
Age 16 & Over	\$75	\$25

This fee is set by US Passport Services. There is an additional fee for expedited service. (Passport Cards cannot be expedited). Passport Photos can be taken at Costco, Longs (CVS), FedEx/Kinkos, Mike's Quality Cameras, and Walgreens Drug Stores. At time of application, you must present your original certified birth certificate, 2 passport photos, and Driver's License. Each person applying must be present, and children under 16 must be accompanied by both parents. Note: The Passport Fee is paid separately by check or money order only (passport fee and city processing fees are individual and can not be combined) and the City Processing Fee – can be paid by cash, check, credit card or money orders. For more information, call 713-4300.

WORK ON SANTA FE OVERCROSSING CONTINUES: The project is expected to take about 15 months to complete, barring any unforeseen delays. Regular updates will be provided as work progresses and significant aspects of the project occur. Agee Construction is the General Contractor hired by the City of Visalia to do the work on the Santa Fe Overcrossing. The resident engineer is David Vallejos with Mendoza and Associates. The project manager for the City of Visalia is Fred Lampe.

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- Week of March 16-20:** Abandoned railroad signal poles are being removed along the west side of Santa Fe Street from Mineral King Avenue to Center Street. Agee Construction set up job trailers and fencing on the northwest corner of Mineral King Avenue and Santa Fe Street. Concrete traffic barriers have been installed on Noble Avenue, restricting through traffic to one lane on the north side of the street between Bridge and Tipton Streets. Concrete traffic barriers have also been installed on Mineral King Avenue between Tipton Street and Bridge Street, restricting traffic to one lane on the south side of the street. The barriers will remain in place throughout the bridge construction portion of the project. In addition, the eastbound on-ramp from Noble Avenue to Highway 198 at Court Street and the westbound off-ramp from Highway 198 to Mineral King Avenue at Court Street will be closed nightly from about 11 p.m. to 4 a.m. to install concrete traffic barriers along Highway 198. Two street closures have occurred on Santa Fe Street. Santa Fe Street is closed from Willow Avenue to Mineral King Avenue north of Highway 198 and from Kaweah Avenue to Noble Avenue south of Highway 198. The Santa Fe Street closures will be in effect from March 16th through July 16th. Trees and shrubs within the construction area will be removed.
- Week of March 23-27:** Remove existing curb, gutter, and sidewalk within the construction zone. Install temporary fencing at existing bridge. Install drainage system at Noble Avenue and Santa Fe Street.

Construction of the City of Visalia's Santa Fe Overcrossing Project is completely funded by Measure-R, a Tulare County tax initiative which provides local funding for transportation projects. For more information concerning this project, please contact City of Visalia Project Manager Fred Lampe at (559) 713-4270.

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