

RATE INCREASE FOR RETIREE HEALTH INSURANCE APPROVED:

On a 3-2 vote, with Vice Mayor Amy Shuklian and Council Member Michael Lane dissenting, Council approved an increase of retiree contributions to the City's health insurance. The increased rate, which goes into effect May 1, will raise the cost by \$29.10 for a retiree's monthly contribution and dependent's coverage by the same amount. This increase raises the total retiree contributions by about \$100,000 a year and leaves the City's contribution unchanged. The number of individuals covered rose from 208 in 2008 to 221 in 2009, and the total cost to the City is more than \$2 million a year. In addition, Council approved to leave the contribution rates for post-Medicare age retirees, about 40 individuals, unchanged for 2010 if the retiree worked for the City at least 15 years, reached age 65 as of Dec. 31, 2009, and have a total household income of less than the 2010 Social Security Earnings limit of \$37,680.

POLICE, FIRE EMPLOYEES HONORED: Four Visalia Police Department employees and three Visalia Firefighters were honored at Monday's Visalia City Council meeting. Police Department staff honored are:

- Curtis Brown, Police Officer of the Year: Detective Brown was hired in November of 2001 as a Police Officer and assigned to the Patrol Division. In 2003, Detective Brown transferred to the Property Crimes Unit. In 2005, Detective Brown was assigned to the Violent Crimes Unit. Detective Brown has also been a member of the Department's SWAT Team.
- **Jim Jolly, Reserve Police Officer of the Year:** Reserve Officer Jim Jolly has been a Level I Reserve Police Officer since 1991. As a Level I Officer, his primary duty is Patrol. In addition to Patrol, Reserve Officer Jolly works special details such as DUI Checkpoints and Gang Details. Reserve Officer Jolly is also the Department's SWAT Tactical Medic.
- Stacy Handley, Communications Operator of the Year: Stacy Handley has been employed with the Visalia Police Department since 1994.
- Carina Mello, Civilian Employee of the Year: Carina began her employment with the Visalia Police Department as an intern in 1997, and shortly thereafter she was hired as an hourly Police Records Specialist working in Administration. In 1999, Carina was promoted to her current position of Senior Administrative Assistant to the Chief and Assistant Chief of Police.

Visalia Firefighters of the Year are:

- Captain Teresa Lovero started with the Visalia Fire Department in January of 1989. Captain Lovero also became the first female fire captain in 2006.
- Engineer Anthony Colbert started with the Visalia Fire Department in December of 2003 and was promoted to Fire Engineer in August of 2006. Engineer Colbert has been a Paramedic since 1996.
- **Firefighter-Paramedic Nick Branch** started with the Visalia Fire Department in November of 2006. He has been a Paramedic for six years and worked as a flight medic before joining the Visalia Fire Department.

COUNCIL WORKSHOP SET FOR FEB. 5-6: The public is invited to the session, set for noon to 8 p.m. Friday, Feb. 5, and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 6, at the Visalia Convention Center, 303 E. Acequia Ave.

NO CHANGE IN HOLIDAY REFUSE SCHEDULE: There will be no change in either Residential or Commercial refuses service for the Martin Luther King Holiday. City of Visalia business offices will be closed for the holiday on Monday, Jan. 18.

