

Inside City Hall

Beyond the headlines

MARCH 8, 2011

COUNCIL APPROVES MEASURES TO PROTECT GENERAL FUND FROM STATE REDEVELOPMENT RAIDS:

In an effort to minimize negative fallout from a budget proposal from the Governor, the Visalia City Council approved a package of proposals to protect its General Fund by ending the operation of its Redevelopment Agency. The City created a Redevelopment Agency in the 1970s to address blighted and underdeveloped properties in Downtown, East and Central Visalia and along Mooney Boulevard. Over the years, these project areas have done a number of positive projects including:

- Partial funding of both Downtown parking structures and the Visalia Mall parking structures;
- Kimball Court and Oak Meadows Senior Housing;
- Single-family housing financing through Habitat for Humanity for very low-income buyers and affordable housing financing for the Tulare County Housing Authority;
- The Encina triplex for developmentally disabled adults,
- Former Costco site assembly;
- Mooney Boulevard Rezoning Study;
- Acquire and assemble properties in the Ben Maddox Auto Row, and;
- The East Kaweah 8-plex affordable housing.

Redevelopment occurs because the Agency borrows money, makes improvements in a project area and then receives tax increments from the increase in property taxes generated in the project area. Without debt, the Agency is not due any tax increment so, as a result, it must incur debt in order to produce projects. Council agreed it was appropriate to take actions to reduce the Agency's debt now should the State decide to discontinue the authority of cities to have redevelopment agencies. For more information, go to [State and Redevelopment Update Report](#).

BIKEWAY PLAN UPDATE APPROVED: Council approved the 2011 Bikeway Plan Update, which builds on the 2006 Update and complements the Waterways and Trail Master Plan approved in March 2010. The Update proposes 30 miles of Class I paths, 75 miles of Class II lanes and 49 miles of additional Class III routes over the next five years. The network is designed to fill in gaps in the existing system and extend the bike network to provide more comprehensive coverage of the City and guidance for bikeway development on future roadway projects. The impact on the improvements on vehicle circulation should be minimal while providing the opportunity for safer, more convenient bicycle travel within the city and to neighboring communities. Get the 2011 [Bikeway Plan](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS GIVE BOOST TO LOCAL ECONOMY: While Spring hasn't officially "sprung", there are several significant events coming to the City. Attendees do their part in helping the local economy. Please make them feel welcome!

- **Western United Dairymen, March 16-18**— Visalia will host approximately 250 members of the Western United Dairymen for its annual convention. The WUD works to promote sound legislative and administrative policies and programs for the profitability of the industry and the welfare of the consumers.
- **Great Western Fan Festival, April 28-30:** The Great Western Fan Festival returns to Visalia for its second consecutive year. During the 3-day festival, the city will welcome visitors from across the United States to hear some of the nation's most popular voices in Southern Gospel music. Volunteers are needed to manage the 3,000+-attendee event. If you'd like to help, email Danika Heatherly at Danika@visitvisalia.org.

MAKE RESERVATIONS NOW FOR SEQUOIA SHUTTLE: Sequoia Shuttle is now taking reservations for the 2011 season. Roundtrip service is only \$15. Book today by visiting: www.SequoiaShuttle.com.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR EARTH DAY: “Think Green-Be Green” on Saturday, April 16 at the City of Visalia’s Earth Day 2011. This year’s event includes a Mill Creek beautification project and an exhibitor’s event near the corner of Mineral King Avenue and Conyer Street in downtown Visalia. At last year’s event, volunteers removed over 6 tons of trash, recyclables, and green waste from the St. John’s River. Businesses, organizations and individuals are encouraged to participate. You can become an event sponsor or simply donate your time and/or products to the event. For information on how to register for the event, contact Nathan Garza with the Natural Resource Conservation Division at (559) 713-4532 or by email at ngarza@ci.visalia.ca.us.

FLU CASES RISE IN CITY, COUNTY: Influenza illness, commonly known as “flu”, has increased in the last several weeks in the City and in Tulare County. Influenza is a serious respiratory infection with symptoms that can include fever, cough, sore throat, head ache, and body aches. The infection is spread from droplets when people with influenza talk, cough or sneeze. Influenza vaccine is available at local physicians’ offices, clinics, pharmacies and through the Tulare County immunization program. Vaccine is especially important for people with a chronic medical condition, the elderly, young children and pregnant women as they are particularly vulnerable to infection. To avoid exposure to the virus it is recommended to wash your hands often, use an alcohol based hand rub when soap and water are not available, avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth, and avoid contact with sick people.

If you become sick with symptoms of influenza, you should take the following steps:

- Avoid contact with other people, except to seek medical care.
- Wait 24 hours after your fever is gone to continue normal activities.
- Cover your nose and mouth with your elbow or a tissue if coughing or sneezing to decrease spread of the virus

Emergency signs that should prompt urgent care are:

- Fast breathing or shortness of breath.
- Bluish skin and/or rash.
- Dizziness, confusion, irritability.
- Dehydration (not drinking enough fluids).
- Return of symptoms or worsening of cough after a period of improvement

Most people recover at home with increased fluids and plenty of rest. Young children, people over 65, people with chronic medical conditions, pregnant women, and people with obesity are at risk of more serious illness and complications and they should consult their health care provider.

APPLICATIONS BEING ACCEPTED FOR CITY’S COMMITTEES: The City of Visalia is accepting applications from interested citizens for six of its City committees. Applications are accepted on a continuous basis and kept for a period of two years. Visit the City’s website at www.ci.visalia.ca.us, under “Committees/Commissions” to view the informational handbook and application or contact the City Clerk’s Office at 713-4512.

The following committees currently have vacancies:

- **Citizen’s Advisory Committee** – Acts as a liaison between the general public and the City Council concerning community issues. The Committee has a current opening for one regular member and is expecting three additional vacancies in June. The committee also has four vacancies for alternate members. Interested persons should file their applications immediately as interviews are expected to

take place in March 2011.

- **Environmental Committee** – heightens environmental awareness and conservation in Visalia. Issues addressed include air quality, hazardous waste, recycling, water conservation and all other natural resources. The Committee currently has two regular member vacancies and one alternate member vacancy.
- **Historic Preservation Committee** – administers and carries out the standards and specifications of the Historic Preservation Ordinance and promotes historic preservation including encouraging building owners to initiate preservation efforts. The committee currently has vacancies for two regular members and two alternate members.
- **North Visalia Neighborhood Advisory Committee** – serves as a liaison between the City and the North Visalia community. The Committee has openings for three regular members.
- **Transit Advisory Committee** – researches and analyzes the community’s continuing transit needs, reviews operations, markets the transit program and makes recommendations about the business affairs of the transit system. The Committee currently has two vacancies for alternate members.
- **Waterways and Trails Committee** – advises on matters related to the Bikeway Master Plan and the Waterway and Trail Master Plan. The Committee currently has one vacancy for a regular member.

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