

# Inside City Hall

Beyond the headlines

**JUNE 21, 2011**

**FIVE VIE FOR COUNCIL VACANCY:** Five Visalians will be invited to interview with City Council members at 4 p.m. on Monday, June 27, to fill the vacant Council seat. The five are: Adam Peck; Milton Morrison; Luke Feldstein; Don Sharp; and Jim Robinson. Each will get 5-10 minutes to discuss their qualifications, followed by questions from Council members. The interviews are open to the public, however candidates are asked not be in chambers until after they have met with Council. If the City Council chooses to make an appointment, the appointee would only serve until a permanent successor is elected at the November 2011 election. The Council may eventually decide to not appoint a successor and instead allow the seat only to be filled during the November 2011 election. The vacancy was created by the resignation of Michael Lane who left to accept a job in San Francisco. In. To read the staff report, click [here](#). To read the letters of interest, click [here](#). In a related move, the Council voted to place the vacant office on the November ballot. The candidate receiving the third highest number of votes in that City election will fill the unexpired term which will end in November 2013.

**COUNCIL ADOPTS BUDGET AMENDMENTS; POLICE, FIRE SEE STAFF REDUCTIONS:** Low sales tax revenues contributing to a reduced Measure T fund led Council to adopt budget amendments that reduce the number of police officers by three and the hiring of 14 future firefighters to 11. Measure T, the quarter-cent sales tax increase, has added 28 police officers and four firefighters since it passed in 2004. Council approved the cuts of three officer positions through attrition and agreed to move three positions from Measure T to the General Fund. Council also approved \$950,000 in budget reduction and a one-time use of \$475,000 in reserves to reduce a \$1.4 million budget deficit for Fiscal Year 2011-12. For all of the approved actions for the General Fund and Capital Funds, click [here](#).

**COUNCIL ADJUSTS RATES, FEES:** Council approved new fees and fee increases and decreases to the following services: Administrative; business tax; Convention Center; Community Development; Engineering; impact fees; Parks & Recreation; and Public Works. All of the proposed changes were reviewed and recommended for Council adoption by City committees and commissions. For all of the approved fees, click [here](#).

**IN OTHER COUNCIL NEWS:** The City Council took action to certify the final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and upheld the Planning Commission's approval of the Conditional Use Permit for the expansion of the existing Wal-Mart at Noble, east of Ben Maddox, and variance for business signage, and added several conditions to address land use concerns raised by residents in the area, including hours of loading and unloading.

**COOLING CENTER OPEN THROUGH JUNE 23:** The City of Visalia will open its Transit Center as a Cooling Center for the community's use from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. through Thursday, June 23. The Transit Center, at 425 E. Oak Ave., provides amenities such as ample seating, vending machines, and restrooms. All of the bus routes eventually lead to the Transit Center, providing convenient transportation. The Visalia Fire Department offers the following tips to cope with the heat:

- Avoid prolonged exposure to the sun and, when possible, stay in the shade or an air-conditioned room;
- Wear loose fitting, light-colored clothes;

- Never leave children or pets in a vehicle, even for short periods of time, as temperatures inside vehicles can rapidly climb to live-threatening levels, even with the windows partially open;
  - Periodically check on children and the elderly;
  - Remember that animals are affected by the heat and make sure they have plenty of water and access to shade.
- For more information, contact the Visalia Fire Department at 713-4600.

## **PARKS & RECREATION FOUNDATION, SCE PARTNER FOR FREEDOM CELE-**

**BRATION:** The Visalia Parks and Recreation Foundation is partnering with Southern California Edison Company to present this year's Freedom Celebration. The event, which will be held at Giant Chevrolet Mineral King Bowl, will be free to the public but a donation of \$3 a person is requested to help defray costs to the Foundation. This year, Southern California Edison is celebrating its 125 Anniversary and are tying this anniversary to the lighting of the streetlights in Visalia on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1886. The program, which starts at 7:15 PM, will include local band, Long Riders, a flyover by the US Military and, of course, culminate in a fireworks spectacular. Concessions will be provided by several vendors. Gates open at 7:00 PM. Volunteers are needed to take gate donations and to sell novelties. Volunteers will need to be at the VIP booth at 6:45 and will be needed until fireworks begin at 9:00 pm. Anyone interested in helping should contact Carol Hoppert Hays at 936.4400.

**SUMMER NIGHT LIGHTS 2011:** Visalia Parks & Recreation hosts Summer Night Lights on Saturdays from 8 to 11:30 p.m. through July 30. Visalia youth and teens are welcome to join in free activities, entertainment and food. The events will be held at the following locations: June 25—Boys and Girls Club; July 2—Mt. Whitney Pool; July 9—Rawhide Stadium; July 16—Anthony Community Center; July 23—Visalia NAZ; and July 30—Riverway Sports Park. Families are welcome on July 2 and July 30. For more information, call 713-4365 or email [recreation@ci.visalia.ca.us](mailto:recreation@ci.visalia.ca.us).

**DUMP ON US FOR FREE ON JULY 9:** The City will hold a Dump-On-Us from 7 a.m. to noon on Saturday, July 9, at the Visalia Corporation Yard at 335 N. Cain. The event is free and available for all Visalia residents. It is an opportunity to rid your property of any garbage, electronic waste, green waste and household hazardous waste items. A commercial shredding service will also be on site. For more information, call 713-4500 or go to [www.dumponus.org](http://www.dumponus.org).

**CITY, PARK SERVICE RECEIVE \$10,000 GRANT:** Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, in cooperation with the City of Visalia, received an America's Best Idea grant (\$10,000) from the National Park Foundation to support the launch of "Kids Ride to the Big Trees" project and extends an invitation to various groups interested in participating in it. This project provides opportunities for 1,000 kids-of-all-ages (with the focus on youth and underserved populations) to ride the Sequoia Shuttle to Sequoia National Park and explore the Giant Forest area through September 25, 2011. The Sequoia Shuttle is managed by the City of Visalia, which offered a group discount in order to accommodate as many riders as possible for this project. Once inside the park, rangers welcome the groups, provide a quick overview of the parks, and offer them the chance to see this amazing place. Organizations that work with underserved groups, especially youth, are invited to contact City of Visalia Transit at (559) 713-4594 and ask to participate in the America's Best Ideas Grant. For more information about Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, including winter/spring shuttle service and ranger-led programs, please call 559-565-3341 or visit [www.nps.gov/seki](http://www.nps.gov/seki).

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