

Inside City Hall

Beyond the headlines

JULY 19, 2011

On Parr With Visalia



Jim and Bonnie Parr enjoy a breakfast of Greek Scramble and Waffles with peaches locally grown at Tazzaria Café during their two-day stay to judge Visalia in the Best of Food category of a national competition.

VISALIA WINES, DINES FOR NATIONAL 'BEST OF FOOD' HONORS:

You might say there was a feeding frenzy in Visalia on Monday, July 11, as the City participated in a national search for the best small-town food in America with a celebration of local restaurants. The City received the second-highest number of votes in the first phase of the Best of the Road contest sponsored by Rand McNally and USA TODAY, and Visalia is one of six finalists in the contest's best-food category. Jim and Bonnie Parr of St. Petersburg, Fla., were one of five teams of volunteer judges who drove across America to visit finalists. The City served up a full day of touring Visalia's abundant selection of local restaurants, attractions, and agri-tourism businesses. Cities will be ranked on a variety of factors including team reports, the opinions of travel experts, and community involvement. The winner will be announced on July 22 in New Orleans.

COUNCIL HEARS EFFECTS OF STATE BUDGET REDUCTIONS ON CITY BUDGET:

The new budget signed by the Governor on June 29 mainly affects the City's General Fund and Redevelopment. Administrative Services Director Eric Frost updated the Council on impacts of these changes on the City's budget. The budget adopted by Council assumed State takeaways of \$800,000 and a \$475,000 deficit to be paid for from reserves. The new projected State budget take is \$490,000, \$310,000 less than anticipated and leaving a General Fund deficit of \$165,000. Council also approved waiting to see what develops before making a final determination on Redevelopment. The current legislation permits agencies until Oct. 1, 2011 to determine if they want to retain their agencies by making a required contribution to the State, which would be roughly \$2.5 million this fiscal year and \$600,000 a year for the life of the agency. On Monday, the League of California Cities, the California Redevelopment Association and the cities of San Jose and Union City filed a petition with the California Supreme Court, challenging the constitutionality of AB 1X 26 and AB 1X 27, the two redevelopment bills passed as part of the state budget in June. AB

1X 26 eliminates redevelopment agencies. AB 1X 27 allows agencies to continue to exist (albeit on life-support) if they agree to pay their share of \$1.7 billion this year and \$400 million annually in perpetuity. The lawsuit also requested the California Supreme Court to issue a stay to prevent the legislation from going into effect until the Court can rule on the merits of these claims. To learn more, click [here](#).

COUNTY BOARD REDISTRICTING MAPS VETTED: Council members were unanimous in their support of Plan C, one of three redistricting maps recommended by the Tulare County Citizen's Advisory Committee for new Board of Supervisor's Districts. Of the three, Plan C puts Visalia is only two districts. Communities of interest are kept intact (Goshen with Visalia, North Visalia with the major Visalia district and linked to Goshen and Ivanhoe, and also respects the Visalia Unified School District boundaries). Plan B was the least preferred as it splits Visalia into three districts and divides communities of interest. Northern Visalia would be split into a separate district, seemingly disenfranchising a strong Hispanic population in Visalia from the rest of the community, and it does not link Visalia with Goshen. It also does not include portions of Visalia's urban boundary on the north. The committee's final report will be available for review following their final meeting today. October 31 is the legal deadline for the Board of Supervisors to take action and approve the maps.

OTHER COUNCIL NEWS: Council members unanimously approved the first reading of an ordinance prohibiting medical marijuana businesses and dispensaries within the City limits and establishing standards for personal use and consumption. The ordinance also creates a regulation to restrict the personal growing of medical marijuana to a 100-square foot space inside a fully enclosed and secured structure. Periodic inspections will also be required to ensure conformance with City standards. The ordinance will come back to Council on Aug. 1 for final adoption, and if approved, will take effect 30 days thereafter. Council approved the use of \$21,000 by a new countywide tourism group to develop a regional tourism program. The name of Field No. 1 in the C.R. Shannon Baseball Complex will be changed to the Clyde Soto Field in the Riverway Sports Complex, set to host the Cal Ripken Youth Baseball World Series Aug. 11-20.

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT AUG. 2: On Tuesday, August 2nd, Neighborhood Watch groups throughout Visalia will be hosting Block Parties, joining forces with thousands of communities nationwide for the "28th Annual National Night Out". This will be a wonderful opportunity for neighbors to get reacquainted, sending a message of unity against crime and promoting Neighborhood Watch & Community Spirit. Registered Neighborhood Watch groups will be visited by Visalia Police Department staff, McGruff the Crime Fighting Dog, Fire Department along with City Council Members and other City agencies.

NOMINATION PAPERS AVAILABLE FOR NOV. 8 ELECTION OUT: Nomination Papers for offices to be voted on at the November 8, 2011 Consolidated Districts Election are now available through Friday, August 12, 2011, in the Elections Division, Government Plaza, 5951 South Mooney Blvd., Visalia. office hours are: 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday thru Thursday; 8 a.m. noon on Friday; and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday, August 12. For further information regarding filing for an elective office, call (559) 624-7300 or for information on nomination papers that have been filed, check the current candidate list at www.tularecoelections.org Two council members and one short-term council members for the Visalia City Council and three board members for Area 5, 6 and 7 for the Visalia Unified School District will be on the November ballot. City Council Members and Visalia Unified School District Members require nomination signatures, which are gathered during the nomination period.

SEQUOIA SHUTTLE SALES SET RECORD: Only halfway into the 2011 Sequoia Shuttle season, and ticket sales are 49% above last year, and 40% over any previous year. With gas prices still high, the Sequoia Shuttle tops the list for many looking for inexpensive ways to spend their summer vacation. "A lot of the growth has to do with many returning customers and groups who make trips to the Sequoias on the Shuttle every year," said Gamaliel Anguiano of Visalia Transit. Additional service has been added to offer plenty of room for individuals, families and groups. Advanced reservations are recommended. Round-trip tickets are only \$15 and include the park entry fee and unlimited shuttle service inside the park. Group discounts are available for only \$12 (for groups of 6 or more. Go to www.sequoiashuttle.com or call (877) Bus-Hike (877-287-4453).

SUMMER RECREATION PROGRAM GUIDE OUT NOW: Registration is now open for summer programs through the Visalia Parks & Recreation Department. If you didn't receive a copy of the Program guide in the mail, they are available at the Anthony Community Center at 345 N. Jacob St., or to online at www.liveandplayvisalia.com. For more information, call 713-4365.

FIRE TECHNICAL RESCUE TEAM RECOGNIZED: The Visalia Fire Department was recently recognized by the California Emergency Management Agency (CalEMA) as a Type 2—Medium Rescue Department for meeting the standards, and securing the equipment and training necessary to meet the high standards. The effort was led by Fire Captain Derek Fricke, who has over 15 years of technical rescue experience and is a leader in this discipline in Tulare County. CalEMA representatives made a site visit on May 17 to inspect rescue equipment and training records. CalEMA Fire and Rescue Chief Kim Zagaris commented, "We were impressed by the devoted and professional manner the members of your Department demonstrated for us . . . The equipment, vehicles and training that your department has obtained are of high quality and will serve the system greatly." As a Type 2-Medium Rescue, the Visalia Fire Department may be called upon to assist anywhere in the State. The Technical Rescue Team can provide confined space rescue, trench rescue, swiftwater rescue, high and low angle rope rescue, and collapse rescue.

GRANT-WRITING WORKSHOP FOR NON-PROFITS SCHEDULED: Grant-writing training is being held for eligible organizations wishing to apply for grants through the Non-Profit Program Fund available through the City of Visalia. A subcommittee of the Citizens Advisory Committee, which oversees the grant process and makes recommendations on funding to the City Council, will offer three grant-writing workshops from 10 to 11 a.m. Saturday, August 6, from 6 to 7 p.m. Thursday, August 11, and from 11 a.m. to noon Tuesday, August 16 in the City Council Chambers, 707 W. Acequia Ave., in Visalia. *Applicants must attend one workshop session as a prerequisite for submitting an application unless the agency was an award winner in FY 2010-11.* The Visalia Non-Profit Program Fund is available to qualified non-profit and government agencies with programs or services for people under age 18 in the City of Visalia. The fund is designed to assist agencies in providing gang prevention/intervention programs and for services aimed at improving quality of life for youth, including at-risk youth. The minimum award is \$3,000, and the maximum amount is \$26,000, or 20 percent of the total annual funding for FY 2011-12 of \$130,000. An application for funding can be obtained at City Hall West (707 West Acequia), from the City's website (www.ci.visalia.ca.us), or requested by email (eybarra@ci.visalia.ca.us). The application and all required attachments must be received by 5 p.m. on Friday, August 26, 2011 at City of Visalia/CAC at 707 W. Acequia Ave., Visalia, CA 93291.

JAPANESE DELEGATION TO VISIT VISALIA: Host families are needed to house visitors from Miki City, Japan, from Aug. 22-27. There are nine women and one male, ages from high school up to early 60s. Those interested in hosting a visitor will be asked to complete a questionnaire in order to best match guests to prospective hosts. Hosts will be responsible for providing a private room for one guest, transportation on a minimal basis during their stay, and some meals. Most activities will be planned and costs covered. Interested families should contact Kathy Rouse at 559-713-4355 or by email at krouse@ci.visalia.ca.us by 5 p.m. Friday, Aug. 5.

You can now self-subscribe to receive issues of "Inside City Hall". Go to the City's website at www.ci.visalia.ca.us, click on About Visalia and go to Inside City Hall Newsletter. For information, contact Community Relations Manager Nancy Loliva at nloliva@ci.visalia.ca.us or call 713-4535.