



**SEPTEMBER 7, 2011**

**FOUR OFFICERS RECEIVE MEDAL OF VALOR:** Visalia Police Captain Perry Phipps, Detective Nate Flaws, Detective Blake McEwen and Officer Josh Pena were awarded the Medal of Valor at the Sept. 6 Visalia City Council meeting by Visalia Police Chief Colleen Mestas. The four officers received this prestigious award for their exceptional courage, extraordinary decisiveness and swift action in confronting and neutralizing an armed suspect who had shot Lay Bishop Clay Sannar at the Church of Latter Day Saints earlier on August 29, 2010. Sannar ultimately succumbed to his injuries.

**COUNCIL NAMES 10 TO ELECTION TASK FORCE:** At its Sept. 6 meeting at the Visalia Convention Center, the Visalia City Council appointed the following Visalia residents to the Election Process Task Force: Robert Aguilar, Brody Blain, Phil Bourdette, Jennifer Gomez, Nathan Hernandez, Tom Johnson, Darlene Mata, Glenn Morris, Stephen Peck and Harry Wood. Vice Mayor Amy Shuklian and Council member Warren Gubler, who served as the Council's Election Process Subcommittee, will recommend the final three members of the Task Force to the Council at its September 19 meeting. The task force will be responsible for considering several areas, including:

- Reviewing the types of City Council election formats being used in other cities that comply with federal and state election law;
- Considering whether the Council should consider changing how it is elected, including the implementation of a by-district election process, and;
- Considering the current demographic and voter makeup statistics in the 2010 Census and recent election data, and how these statistics relate to whether and how the City's election process should be changed.

Based on the research, the Task Force will then make a recommendation on if an at-large election is still appropriate for the City, how many districts would be included if a by-district election is recommended, and other changes to the election process.

**HISTORIC RECOGNITION PROGRAM APPROVED:** The City Council approved a Historic Recognition Program (HRP) that allows interested building owners an opportunity to be considered for a plaque to identify buildings with local historical significance to the community. To qualify for an interpretive marker, the building must be at least 75 years old, researched for its authenticity, and at a minimum, the date of construction must be reasonably determined. The research and documentation must be conducted by qualified historical research personnel approved by the City of Visalia Historic Preservation Advisory Committee, and submitted with the application. Once mounted, all plaques become the property and responsibility of the building owner. The structure does not need to be within the City of Visalia Historic District or on the Local Register of Historic Structures. The estimated cost of each plaque, with installation, is \$750, and funding is currently available through a \$10,500 grant from Kaweah Collectors. For more information, click [here](#).

**OTHER COUNCIL NEWS:** The City Council authorized the City Manager to sign a contract for \$30,000 with the Arts Consortium to coordinate the implementation of the City's Cultural Plan. Half of that amount, or \$15,000, is used to fund Cultural arts grants throughout the community. The total amount is equal to the funds the City contributed in the last budget, and has enabled the Arts Consortium to receive additional funds through the State's arts program.

**HEALTHIER CHOICES AT VISALIA COMMUNITY CENTERS:** The City's Community Centers are now healthier places to grab a quick snack or beverage. The Visalia Parks and Recreation Department has established a Healthy Beverage and Snack Standard for vending machines at its four community centers. The standards call for at least half of the drinks and snacks inside vending machines to meet certain nutrition standards. The new standards are an effort to help improve health and prevent Type 2 diabetes, becoming overweight and obesity. For more information, click [here](#).

**TRANSIT CALL CENTER HITS 6,000:** The Green Line, a toll-free call center for public transit systems in Tulare and Kings Counties, hit a milestone in August with over 6,000 calls. With a combined population of over 460,000 potential bus riders, the Green Line has proven to be a successful service that has seen its call volume increase from 244 calls in its first month in June 2009 to over 6,000 calls in August, the highest month ever. Citizens of both counties can travel regionally using only public transit systems. The Green Line is a way to bring transit information on all systems into a "one-stop shop." The call center is easily accessible via a toll-free number (1-877-40-Go Green).

**BUILDING PERMIT VALUES UP 20 % FOR YEAR:** Building permits issued for new commercial projects are up for the year by 11% and the value is up a whopping 276% with \$33.7 million through August of 2011, compared to \$8.9 in 2010. Total value of all permits issued is up 20% - \$100 million compared to \$83 million for the first eight months of the year.

**VISALIA CONVENTION CENTER HAS 'MONSTER' YEAR:** The revenue figures are all in and FY 2010-11 was a Monster Year for the Convention Center. Event revenues hit a record high at \$2,265,462, beating the previous record set in 2008 with \$2,185,378 and exceeding budget by almost 11%. Numbers were coming in stronger than budgeted but the final revenues for June sent the totals way over the top. June is typically a slow month but this year had 4 conventions, 2 conferences and 9 banquets making it easily the best June ever. And September shows no signs of slowing down! Here's a preview of events coming to the Convention Center and estimated attendees: Sept. 8— St. Mary's 150<sup>th</sup> Year Celebration , 800 expected; Sept. 13—Tulare County Office of Education College Night, 2,500 expected; Sept. 23-25—Visalia Home Expo, 6,000 expected; Sept. 16—Harvest Moon Ball Social Swirl, a Fund-raiser for Boys & Girls Club, 400 people expected; and Sept. 26—Amy Grant and Michael W. Smith Concert, 2,000 expected.

**TASTE THE ARTS SEPT. 29-OCT. 1:** Visalia's Taste the Arts, a festival held September 29 through October 1 celebrates the richness and diversity of the arts in Tulare County and gives artists, musicians, performers, and art organizations from throughout the county an opportunity to show off the best of their work through performances, exhibits, and demonstrations. Taste the Arts is part of the Arts Consortium's Cultural Arts Plan, and debuted as an opportunity for residents and visitors to experience, or "taste", the area's arts first-hand. This year's event is kicked off by the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Waiters Race, and a free street concert with the up and coming "Free Energy". Friday features the Creative Center's Art Xposed Hair and Fashion show and the renowned "Blind Boys of Alabama". Garden Street will be lined with festive tents on Oct. 1, with more than 35 artists displaying their work. An Urban Art Show, Visalia Farmer's Market food sculpture contest, and clay wheel will give the public an opportunity to move from spectator to participant. Bands and musicians, including *Phil Walker* and *Occasional Brass*, will entertain the crowd as they stop for a drink or food at local favorite gathering spot - the Garden Street Plaza. Around the corner, youth from Kids Edition, YMCA, Dance Arts, the Ruby Slipper Performing Arts Academy and SoundNVision will take the stage with song and dance. At 6 pm, the newly formed Visalia Opera Company presents "Saints and Sinners" at the 210. At 7 pm, the Enchanted Playhouse Theatre Company presents "James & the Giant Peach", featuring local actors of all ages. And at 8 pm, the night ends with a free performance by the Tulare County Symphony performing crowd pleasing selections from their Pops in the Park collection at the beautiful Visalia Fox Theatre. This will definitely not be the weekend to be out of town.

**BACK TO SCHOOL 5K/10K AND KIDS FUN RUN:** Come out on Saturday , Sept. 10, for the Visalia Parks & Recreation Department's Back to School celebration. Events start at 8 am at Cutler Park and the 5K and 10K and Kids Fun Run routes are along the scenic St. John's River Trail. Partner proceeds benefits the PTA's of Visalia. For a registration form, click [here](#).

**CHAMBER HOSTS CANDIDATES FORUMS:** The Visalia Chamber of Commerce will host a Coffee with the Candidates, including City Council candidates, from 8 to 10 a.m. on Thursday, Oct. 6 at 210, 210 W. Center Ave. The League of Women Voters is also hosting a Candidates Forum from 7 to 9 p.m. on Monday, Sept. 26 at 210.

**NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR COMMUNITY PARTNER AWARD:** The City of Visalia's Disability Advocacy Committee (DAC) is seeking nominations from the community for the 2011 Community Partner Award. The deadline for submission is Sept. 9, 2011. The award will be presented at the DAC-hosted "Barrier Awareness Day," which will be held Saturday, Oct. 8, 2011 at the Garden Street Plaza from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. "We want to honor individuals and businesses within Visalia who are going above and beyond to break down barriers that our disabled residents face on a daily basis while going about their day-to-day business within our community," said Trilby Barton, chair of the Barrier Awareness Day event. "Examples of that service is staying in compliance with ADA [American Disabilities Act] requirements, or advocating for change." The award will be presented to an individual, community group, neighborhood, organization or local business that strives to make a difference in the disabled community of Visalia. The criteria for the award include:

- The act of courage or service to the community can be ongoing or have occurred after Jan. 1, 2010.
- Nominees must reside, work, or be active in the City of Visalia.
- Entries must be submitted by mail, fax or email by Sept. 9.

For a nomination form, click [here](#). For information on the award, call Carlos Estrada at (559) 738-2283.

**911 COMMEMORATIVE CEREMONY:** The Visalia Fire Department will join in an evening Honoring 911 and Celebrating Freedom. The event is supported by local pastors and congregations from throughout Visalia and will be held at 4:30 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 11, at Visalia First Assembly Church. The evening will include honoring those who lost their lives on 9/11, presenting of colors, worship led by Terry and Nancy Clark, testimonies and prayer for local law enforcement, and others who serve the community. A free hamburger feed will follow the meeting. For information, call 687-0220.

**VICE MAYOR HOLDS OFFICE HOURS SEPT. 14:** Vice Mayor Amy Shuklian will hold her regular monthly office hours from 5 to 6:30 p.m. in the large conference room at City Hall, at 707 W. Acequia Ave. The first hour, from 5 to 5:45 p.m. will be a time for drop-in visits, and appointments can be scheduled in advance for the second hour, from 5:45 to 6:30 p.m. To schedule an appointment, contact Gladys Ruiz at 713-4314. Shuklian can be reached through 713-4400, then enter 8313, or by email at [ashuklian@ci.visalia.ca.us](mailto:ashuklian@ci.visalia.ca.us).

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