

# Inside City Hall

Beyond the headlines

NOVEMBER 8, 2011

## CITY UPDATES



### Meet Parky!

The new Parks & Recreation Mascot was unveiled at a recent Parks & Recreation Commission meeting. The mascot provides entertainment for children and adults at City parks.

Commissioner members from left are: Robert Doi, Carla Calhoun, Parky, Vice Chair Lesa Mann, Ben Filiponi, Chairman Robert Mijares, Jeff Bosswell and Travis Griffith.

**BUILDING PERMITS DOWN 3%, VALUE UP 25%:** The number of new building permits for commercial projects is up 37% for the year through October and new residential additions and alteration permits are up 16%. Total valuation of all permits is up 25% for the year—from \$95,246,312 in 2010 to \$119,000,070 through October in 2011. Permits for new single family dwellings are down 33%, and new multi-family permits are down 25%.

**CHECK BEFORE YOU BURN SEASON STARTS:** The Valley Air District prohibits wood burning when deteriorating air quality is forecast. When a prohibition is declared, burning any solid fuel in a residential fireplace or wood-burning device is not permitted and violations are subject to fines. Winter air quality is affected by a mix of extremely small particles from dust, smoke and soot and exhaust from heavy-duty trucks and other vehicles. Particles this small enter directly into the bloodstream and can cause lung and heart problems and premature death. For your health and the health of the community—Check Before You Burn. For more information about Check Before You Burn or the daily wood-burning forecast, visit [www.valleyair.org](http://www.valleyair.org). Forecasts are also available at 1-800-SMOG-INFO (766-4463).

### POLICE DEPARTMENT PLACES IN STATEWIDE TRAFFIC SAFETY

**COMPETITION:** The Visalia Police Department placed second out of 14 law enforcement agencies of similar size in the California Law Enforcement Challenge, a friendly competition between California law enforcement agencies striving to reach new goals each year in traffic safety. Each year, a panel of independent traffic safety experts from across the country review and judge each application. The best submissions are recognized for their overall traffic safety programs. The department placed within the category of 106-160 sworn officers. Statistics are as follows: Seat Belt Citations, 1604; Child Safety Seat Citations, 82; Speed Citations, 1872, and; DUI arrests, 1012.

## CITY COUNCIL MEETING RECAP



**ANIMAL CARE CENTER MOVES FORWARD:** At the Nov. 7 regular meeting, City Council members unanimously authorized WLC Architects to proceed with construction document development and approved the bidding of the new Animal Care Center project once the documents are completed. Council also authorized staff to enter into negotiations with partner cities who desire to cover their share of the use of the new facility and to solicit funding from local lending institutions. The Animal Care Center is part of an overall proposed campus which will ultimately include the Valley Oak SPCA Adoption and Education center, which is to be funded with private funds raised by the non-profit. The current program design accommodates an average of 15,000 animals a year. Of that, roughly two-thirds are from the City. Prior to the construction of the new shelter, the City will need a financial commitment from other cities who are using the facility or modify the size to accommodate only those willing to partner. A phasing plan, consisting of a core administrative and intake area and several kennel pods can be constructed initially or at a later date, and can be expanded to accommodate more animals should the need arise. The total cost is estimated to be about \$7 million and as designed would serve the Cities of Visalia, Tulare, Dinuba, Farmersville, and Exeter. Each city is being asked to commit to cover their pro-rated share of the cost and will be required to sign a 20-year agreement.

### COUNCIL APPOINTS TASK FORCE MEMBERS; MAYOR NAMES

**CHAIR:** Council named Diane Biehle to the City's Election Process Task Force, and Erma Montion was named to fill the position left vacant by the resignation of Paul Chao. Mayor Bob Link named Darlene Mata as chair of the Task Force. Other task force members are: Robert Aguilar, Brian Blain, Phil Bourdette, Jennifer Gomez, Nathan Hernandez, Tom Johnson, Glenn Morris, Stephen Peck, Harry Wood and Maggie Florez. For more information on the Election Process Task Force, click [here](#).

**OTHER COUNCIL NEWS:** Council approved the Plaza Drive widening project bid by Emmette's Excavation for \$15,884,953, with construction expected to begin by February 2012, and; approved a Construction Management Services contract to Jacobs Engineering at a cost of no more than \$4,718,578 for the Water Conservation Plant upgrade project.

### CITY MOVES FORWARD ON PLANNING NEW 9-1-1

**COMMUNICATIONS CENTER:** An internal Core Project Committee is established and will meet weekly to study and implement a new 9-1-1 Communications Center/Public Safety Building. Council had previously directed staff to proceed with the project as a solo City Venture as opposed to a co-located concept with the County. In its preliminary assessment, the committee will: Review available sites and assess their suitability for the new center and identify other services that could be co-located at the new center. The Committee will provide regular reports on the status of the project. A December report could include a recommendation to approve an RFP to identify a Project Manager. The City plans to build at least a 9-1-1 Communications Center on City-owned property in the east downtown area.

## CITY CALENDAR

**NO CHANGE IN REFUSE SERVICE FOR VETERAN'S DAY:** City of Visalia business offices will be closed on Friday, Nov. 11, in observance of Veteran's Day. The drivers will be working so there will be no change in either Residential or Commercial refuse services.

### HOLIDAY LED LIGHT EXCHANGE SET FOR DEC. 3 IN DOWNTOWN

**VISALIA:** The City of Visalia and Southern California Edison want to help you to save energy this holiday season. Visalia residents are invited to exchange up to 5 of their old incandescent holiday lights for new, energy efficient LED strands – for free! Come on out to the Downtown Visalia Open House event scheduled for Saturday December 3<sup>rd</sup> and be sure to stop by 207 W. Main St. (in front of Nature's Pharmacy) between 11 am and 3 pm. Don't forget to bring up to 5 strands of incandescent holiday lights and exchange them for new LED lights - for free. Five hundred strands of new LED lights are available through this exchange program, which is administered by the City of Visalia and its partnership with Southern California Edison under the auspices of the California Public Utilities Commission. Exchanges are first-come, first-served, while supplies last. If you plan to use lights to decorate during the holiday season, make the switch to LEDs.

Some more reasons to make the switch:

- LEDs reduce energy consumption by as much as 95% compared to traditional incandescent bulbs;
- A typical 50-bulb incandescent strand of lights uses 250 watts and an equivalent 70-bulb LED strand uses only three watts;
- LEDs can produce bright light for up to 20 holiday seasons;
- LEDs do not give off heat like conventional decorative bulbs, reducing the risk of fire, and;
- LEDs are more durable, perform well in cold weather, and provide brighter and bolder light colors.

For more information call the City of Visalia's Natural Resource Conservation Division at 559-713-4531. Light up your Holidays and SAVE!

**NEED A HOLIDAY GIFT IDEA?** Just in time for the Holidays! Purchase your Father-Daughter Dance tickets now for the 2012 event. This year's theme is "Night at the Oscars." Live music, prizes, appetizers and a complimentary photo help to make this a night to remember. The event will be held at the Visalia Convention Center on February 24<sup>th</sup> from 6 to 9pm. Tickets are \$45 per couple and \$20 for each additional daughter. For more information contact 713-4365 or email [mfitzgerald@ci.visalia.ca.us](mailto:mfitzgerald@ci.visalia.ca.us).

**GRAND OPENING, DEDICATION SET FOR PERRY FAMILY PARK:** Join in the celebration and dedication of Visalia's newest neighborhood park on Saturday, Nov. 12, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Perry Family Park at County Center and Visalia Parkway. The dedication ceremony will be held at 10:30 a.m. Music, food and fun for all. For more information, call 713-4365 or email [recreation@ci.visalia.ca.us](mailto:recreation@ci.visalia.ca.us).

### DID YOU CHANGE YOUR SMOKE ALARM BATTERIES WITH THE TIME CHANGE?

With the end of daylight savings time on Sunday also comes the time to change the batteries in all of your smoke detectors. Every year, approximately 2,600 Americans die in home fires. Over half of these deaths (52%) occur between the hours of 10 pm and 7 am, when residents are typically sleeping. The majority of fire victims die or are injured from exposure to smoke and toxic gases, such as carbon monoxide. In addition, smoke obscures vision, decreasing your ability to escape.

- Test your alarms every month (press the test button).
- Change batteries at least once a year. (Pick a date you will remember: when you change your clocks, your birthday, or a holiday)
- Replace the entire smoke alarm every 10 years.

**VISITORS AND CONVENTION BUREAU UPDATES:** The California Order of Eastern Star Grand Chapter Session will be calling Visalia home in October of 2014, 2015 and 2016. The Visalia CVB could not have secured this three-year deal without the collaboration and support from the Convention Center and partner hotels. The Grand Chapter Session will bring in 1,200 out-of-town visitors to Visalia, and close to 1,500 hotel room nights annually. Visalia and the Visalia Marriott at the Convention Center will also be home to the 2013 California Agricultural Commissioners and Sealers Association Spring Conference in May of 2013! This event will attract 100 attendees and approximately 220 hotel room nights. Please welcome the Jobs Daughters Grand Guardian Council attendees if you see them next week around town. The Council meets in November in preparation for the Jobs Daughters Grand Bethel event in June.

*You can now self-subscribe to receive issues of "Inside City Hall". Go to the City's website at [www.ci.visalia.ca.us](http://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](mailto:nloliva@ci.visalia.ca.us) or call 713-4535.*